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WHITE DWARF

ISSUE 72 DECEMBER 1985

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The Christmas spirit appears to be making itself felt in all aspects of the gaming hobby this year. New releases there are in plenty, including *Superpowers, Railway Rivals* and *Warrior Knights*, and the usual deluge of products from chief Santa at *Citadel*, Bryan Ansell. Games shops are full of enthusiastic gamers discussing the virtues of the various games, deciding which ones will help pass the lean winter months of early 1986.

Myself, I'm in no doubt as to which games I'll be toying with over the holiday. *Baseball Strategy, Summmit, 1829* and *Talisman* with its new expansion set will be keeping me occupied well into the new year, in between my excursions into Mega City 1 as Judge Livingstone, gunning for Stevie 'The Puffin' Jackson.

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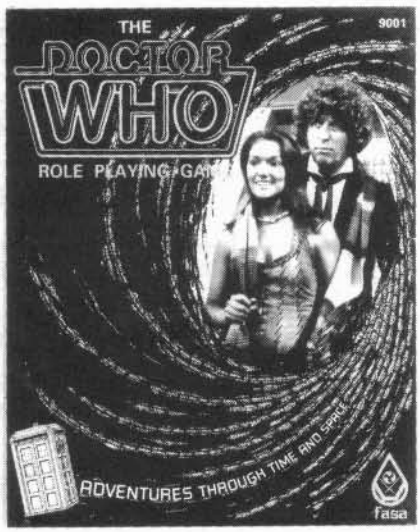
In Open Box, *fantasy and science fiction games and supplements currently in the shops are examined by independent reviewers.*

OPEN BOX

THE DOCTOR WHO ROLE-PLAYING GAME
Role-Playing Game
FASA **£14.95**

A game about *Dr Who* designed by *Americans*? Surely not! But it's true, and the remarkable thing is that they've made such a good job of it. For *Dr Who* is rooted in the minds of a large proportion of the population of this country in such a way that mistakes in this game would very rapidly become obvious. And while it's by no means perfect, I can assure anxious punters that *FASA* have spared no effort in ensuring that the flavour of the series is captured. Let's start at the beginning, though, and get the hard facts out of the way.

The game comes in three books, one for players, one for the GM, and a general source-book. Presentation is generally good, being reminiscent of that used in the *Star Trek* RPG. This similarity goes further, as many of the same rule systems are used – particularly in combat.



The most important difference, however, is that *Dr Who* is played with six-sided dice only, and this requires an alteration in the method of rolling for skill use. This is achieved by means of the Interaction Matrix, a general purpose table used for all skill or attribute use. Each scale of the Matrix is referenced by both a numerical scale of −12 to +12, and a Roman Numeric scale of I to VII. The Roman Numeric scale is that used to grade all attributes and skills, and determines the 'Entry' line to the Matrix, which is moved up and/or down the numeric scale according to situational modifiers. This is done both for the character performing the action (who uses the vertical scale) and the Resistance (whether it be an opposing character's skill, or an abstract value representing difficulty). Cross-indexing on the Matrix yields a number, which a character must roll under on 2d6 to succeed.

Character generation uses the now-popular method of allocation. A random number of points are generated and added to the base of 6 in each of the six attributes, to generate a raw score. This then determines the Level of the attribute. Each successive level costs a number of points equal to its own value, plus the cost of the previous level, making general competence relatively easy, but mastery quite exceptional. The points in each attribute further yield a number of points to be used to generate starting skills. Skills are bought in the same way as attributes, and the system is weighted so that it is easier to acquire skills connected with your higher attributes. Skills are rated in terms of both Levels (Roman Numeric) *and* by the number of points.

Combat is deadly. The *Dr Who* philosophy that if you're hit, you're either incapacitated or dead certainly applies here. While it is based on the Matrix, the Combat system has added complexity, including numerous modifications, and an Action Point system to regulate movement.

These are the hard details. Perhaps more important with a game such as this is the background – the *feel* of the game, and how closely it resembles the feel of the series. Here *FASA* have applied the thoroughness we expect from the makers of *Star Trek*. Certainly there are occasional contradictions with isolated details from the series, but nowhere are these worse than the series' own continuity cock-ups, and they generally make the background far more coherent than one would expect from such a sprawling mythos as *Dr Who*.

The depth of detail is remarkable. Considerable space is (quite rightly) given over to the operation of a TARDIS, and theories of time travel. The *FASA* rationalisation of time travel is slick and playable, and as long as your players aren't deliberately aiming to mess you about will remove the problems of time paradox quite neatly. Details are also given about Gallifrey, and this includes mention of the Celestial Intervention Agency – the underground organisation which is responsible for all these player character Time Lords whizzing about in space and time, righting wrongs, fighting evil, and generally behaving like the Doctor. Players who aren't Time Lords, by the way, are human companions.

Further goodies include stats for a small selection of the Doctor's most dreaded enemies, information on the technological hardware that's available, and copious notes on how to generate alien worlds and inhabitants. Although the latter section contains a stupid error (a linear multiple is used to generate planetary area, when it should be squared) all are usable without being unnecessarily complex. The Game Master's book also contains some excellent essays on the craft of running a rolegame, which should be invaluable to inexperienced GMs.

I can find no major flaws in this game, despite my initial reservations at the idea of a fundamentally British institution being interpreted by an American company. The systems are not revolutionary, but they are quite simple and easy to use, and complement the wealth of background detail admirably. I can appreciate what an achievement it is to wrap together the *Dr Who* mythos into a coherent whole, having tried it myself – there has been a *lot* of effort put into this game, and it shows. Recommended for *anyone* who has watched and enjoyed an episode of *Dr Who*.

Complexity:	5	**Ease of Use:**	7
Production:	7	**Value:**	6
Overall:	8		**Paul Mason**

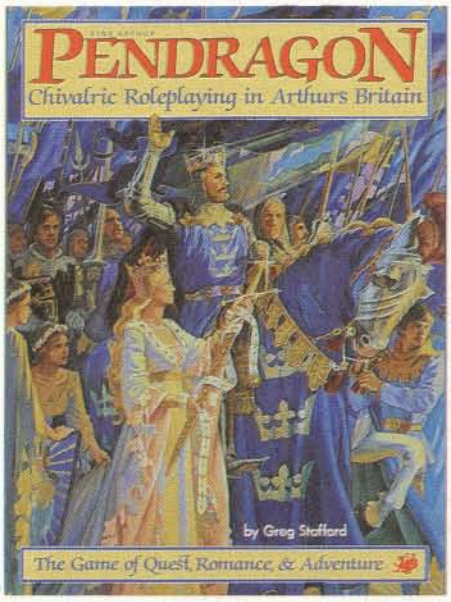
KING ARTHUR PENDRAGON
Role-Playing Game
Chaosium **£25.95**

King Arthur Pendragon, or *Pendragon* as it is constantly referred to, looks like being one of the best systemised role-playing games around. There are more free-form games, such as *AD&D* and *RuneQuest*, but these cannot be realistically compared with *Pendragon* because there is something a lot more essential and vibrant contained within the game itself; it is itching to be played as soon as you open the first book and start reading. *Pendragon* is better compared with *Middle-earth Role Playing* (*MERP*) or *Call of Cthulhu* because it revolves around something specific and laid out for all to see. However, the *MERP* system leaves a lot to be desired (in terms of presentation if nothing else) and *Call of Cthulhu* can be very disconcerting to those who have not read Lovecraft. *Pendragon*, on the other hand, draws from folklore so popular that no one can have escaped exposure to it in one form or another; the bibliography covers sources as diverse as John Steinbeck and Mary Stewart in addition to Sir Thomas Malory, Nennius and *The Mabinogion*. Then there are the popular T H White books and the more recent stories by Gillian Bradshaw and Phyllis Ann Karr. Even if your players are illiterate they can go and see *Excalibur*!

The name of the game, to use a cliché, is Chivalry. Player characters are knights (and possibly ladies) seeking glory for themselves and their lieges; they follow the legendary timeline through from the death of High King Uther Pendragon and wait for his heir to arrive; later they can help unify the Kingdom once more and turn it into an Empire by fighting the marauding Saxons and Irish; and all the time there are tournaments to attend, quests to achieve, damsels to be saved, honour to be upheld and fame and fortune for the taking. Character progression is measured by Glory which can be gained and lost over the course of each year; then in the winter, the knights and nobles return to their homes to lick their wounds and count the spoils of war. The game moves on a much faster time scale than most others, with a year quite possibly passing in a session. This in turn is

reflected by major events happening elsewhere: people are born and grow up and do their deeds (unless player characters interfere) and then die: after all, the scope of the Arthurian epic is truly vast and this game attempts to paint it in all its splendour. So player characters have to participate in all the facets of knightly life, such as gaining a wife and begetting children, preferably boy-children, so that their line can be carried on; and who better to play the son than the player of the father. In this manner, Greg Stafford has elevated the campaign to a new level, where a player must role-play a whole genealogy.

If this is the flavour and style of the *Pendragon* rolegame, what then is the material like? For the £25.95 price tag you get an elegant box containing two rule booklets (one of 88 pages, one of just 16), some character sheets, some characters known from the literature, a summary sheet with tables and a full colour map of Britain as represented by the game. Greg Stafford and his team have put much thought into the game, and an awesome amount of research. They have organised a timeline for the campaign to progress upon: no mean feat when the best scholars cannot even agree which century to place Arthur in; added to which they have produced an



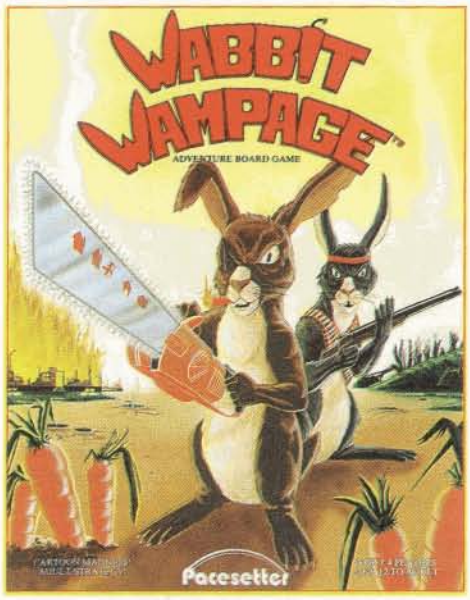
accurate portrayal of British folk beasts that derives nothing from Tolkien's legacy.

For characters, who get the lion's share of the rules, generation is handled very adeptly. There is a span of cultures and talents open to all, with the restrictions of putting knightly skills to the fore, but all these are useful anyway. The skills system derives from *RuneQuest/ Basic Role-Playing* but is simpler and only uses d6s and d20s (you get both in the box). However, Greg Stafford has taken the ideas behind Chivalry and the knightly ideal and converted them into a beautiful system for handling behaviour, based on Personality Traits and Passions. These help to illustrate – but do not restrict – characters, and would greatly facilitate rolegaming for novices. They are also useful tools for both the players and the GM to use in unfamiliar situations: for example, when taking refuge in a monastery and seven beautiful maidens come to the knight's bedchamber, what does he do? The Passions also give characters secondary goals to aim for alongside the primary one of Glory, and are typically spurs such as Loyalty, Love, Hate and Amor. These additions mesh into a unified whole: Skills can be matched with Passions, Passions can interact with Traits and Traits can influence Skills.

Needless to say there are many other parts to the system, all worked in with the background. Rules for battle, for tournaments, for running an estate and a family, for behaviour, for courting . . . The rulebook is enlightening and interesting to read on its own; the text is error-free and accompanied with lavish illustrations by the talented Lisa Free and has glosses in the manner of illuminated mediaeval bibles and texts. These side notes are humorous, illustrative, useful and complement the tenor and spirit of the rules.

Overall, I would not hesitate to recommend the game to any rolegaming aficionado who is looking for inspiration . . . were it not for the dreadful price.

Complexity:	7	**Ease of Use:**	9
Production:	10	**Value:**	6
Overall:	9	**Graham Staplehurst**	



WABBIT WAMPAGE
Boardgame
Pacesetter **£17.95**

Wabbit Wampage is loosely based on most of the cartoons you can remember which did not include mice, cats or pigs. Set in rural America mid bosky glades and rolling arable land the game postulates a war between the tribes of Wabbits and Mr Farmer. The Farmer lives on a four part jig-map. He farms a number of fields abutting the highway and has a number of woods, meadows and buildings on his property. He also has Wabbits and lots of 'em. The belligerant bunnies are not only determined to beat the farmer but the other tribes of rabid rabbits. Make no mistake this is a game with a serious theme.

Also trolling around the property are sundry cartoon characters (a Duck, a Bear, a Big Chicken, and two, count 'em, two Chipmunks); these go by the generic name of Local Critturs. The Farmer is assisted by his Dog (not I note a Dawg) and the Farm Hand who slumbers in the arms of Morpheus beneath l'arbre des Chipmunks. Scattered around the farm are numerous 'artifacts' like shotguns, tractors, etc.

There are twelve turns to the game and each turn is one month in duration. In each turn the players (up to four, one farmer and three tribes of conies) go through the same process. They discard and draw cards. They move a character and attack with him. They then repeat this for each other character all the while playing cards as the whim takes them. The Cards contain Defence cards, Zap cards (in fact, to use current military jargon, dedicated zap cards; each has a particular target including the mail-box), Mail Order cards (all the extraneous elements of cartoon violence – like dynamite – must come from somewhere – the Mail Order Catalogue being the source), Local Crittur cards, Attack cards, and Special cards.

Combat consists of adding 2d10 plus attack bonuses and trying to get more than the target's defence value. This is not easy and most attacks (like in the cartoons) cause little more than momentary concussion, leaving the target free to whomp someone else. Whomping causes the victim to go back to his home base and to lose all his artifacts. This is a game with a lot of whomping.

To add to the agricultural leitmotiv of the piece the turns and the victory conditions reflect the agricultural year. In the Spring months one not only gets points for whomping your enemies (a year-long pursuit among these rubes) but gets points for ploughing fields with the tractor. Most of the Spring turns therefore consist of violent hijackings. Seldom does one see the carrots planted and I fear the designer does not penalise either the cash-less Farmer or the foodless Wabbits. Come Summer one stockpiles the carrots in the barn. What a joyful occasion as all the cartoon characters assist in bringing in the sheaves. Come Fall it's big points for whomping – but the Farmer receives the assistance of the Hunters so watch out Wabbits! In Winter the Wabbits, Soviet-like in their warren structures, launch a Winter Offensive and get points for zippoing the farm buildings while the Farmer tries to fend them off.

What can one say about this game? True to its origins, certainly. Internally consistent, I think so. Physically attractive, again one must say it certainly is. Indeed I may even say it is better researched and more redolent of its subject than are most wargames or RPGs. This is the *Bushido* of wampaging wabbitdom. It's also rather tedious in play with lots of inconclusive dice-rolling. This vice of the game could, however, be instanced as a virtue in that it exactly simulates the continual violence of its subject-matter. If not an inspired design it is at least an informed one.

Complexity:	3	**Value:**	4
Production:	7	**Playability:**	9
Skill:	4	**Overall:**	6

Charles Vasey

Critical Mass *is a regular fantasy and science fiction book review column, written by Dave Langford.*

BAH! HUMBUG!

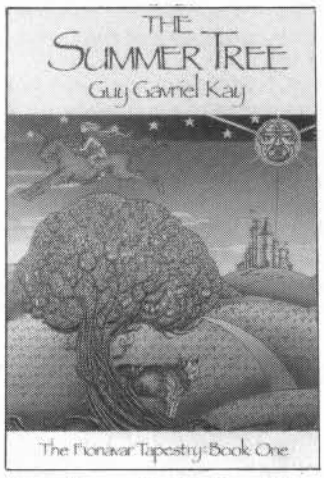
With Christmas releases packing the stands in all their tinsel glitter, it's the reviewer's melancholy duty to play Scrooge and say rude things about the tarnish on each bauble. Gosh, how I wish I could be nice about everything; as a kind-hearted person I hate these cruel phrases . . . (*Bah! Humbug! –Ed.*) Still, some moments make it all worthwhile, as when a burdened postman looked at me and at a *Penguin* parcel addressed to 'David Langford, The White Dwarf'. Your reviewer is about six-foot-three. After cogitation the postman said, 'Is it a kind of pea?' The repartee which rose to my lips was unsuitable for family magazines.

The 1986 Tolkien Calendar [*Unwin* £3.95] is 'fun for all the family': 13 colour plates by Michael Hague, lifted from his luxury edition of *The Hobbit*. One might quibble that Hague's elves are over-chunky, and his Beorn unconvincingly gigantic (twice the height of Gandalf, who's no runt) but it's good value for Tolkien fans.

Rodney Matthews' *In Search of Forever* [*Paper Tiger* 142pp £7.95] is the best of the gift books – art from one who needs no introduction. His exotic, elfin paintings are backed up with sketches, photographs (some of the weirdest shapes were inspired by real-life formations of ice or rock) and an unpretentious commentary which cheerfully admits commercial problems. Budding artists can learn the secrets of 'plotting' a wrap-around cover to make a coherent picture while allowing for title, spine copy, blurb and price. Twee works like *Yendor* are balanced by passionate intensity (his Save The Whales poster hits you in the stomach); familiar props like insects and Moorcockian grotesques look better as part of a wider artistic range. Grab this and get his *Witch World* covers without having to buy dreadful Andre Norton books . . .

A new small press sends *Sceptre Mortal* by Derek Sawde [*Oriflamme* 294pp £2.95] – a venture into stratospheric High Fantasy. High Fantasy has a syntax and diction of its own, and is prone to debilitating bouts of Black Lords, High Kings, Elf Lords, Witch Queens, Fire Demons, Swords, Sceptres and Capital Letters, which oft join their mighty-thewed powers to forge Sentences as Silly-looking as This One. The peril of High Style is that its stiff formality means narrative arthritis, unless redeemed by rhythmic splendour (Eddison), a vein of homeliness (Tolkien), fantastic humour (Dunsany), witty irony (Cabell), or lean poetic brevity (Le Guin). Alas, *Spectre Mortal's* familiar quest plot plugs tirelessly on without any of these things, paragraph after paragraph seizing up in a Spatter of Capitals. And (lots of sentences starting with And or But are another High Style giveaway) what can you make of an author who, after 258 solemnly humourless pages, offers a chapter called 'Pit of the Werebats'? Painful.

Guy Gavriel Kay's *The Summer Tree* [*Unwin* 323pp £8.95] inspires terror by being the first of another trilogy (The Fionavar Tapestry'). Kay is a literate and economical writer, though: the mundane opening sketches relationships in brief dialogues, and for once the transition from Earth to 'a world of which our own is but a shadow' (tum-ti-tum)



doesn't lead to a wholly simplistic set-up with good in the white corner and evil in the black. There are outcrops of High Style, balanced by wit, humanity and such unlikely denizens of fantasy as hangovers. ('Some indeterminate fungus seemed to have taken up residence in his mouth.') Quite a promising start.

For a quick read, try *Cycle of the Werewolf* by Stephen King [*NEL* 128pp £4.95] – which I finished in 20 minutes, there being only 47 pages of large print in a morass of blank sheets, calendars, effective black-and-white pictures and unconvincing colour plates (both by Berni Wrightson). The latter often reveal twists King might reasonably have hoped would surprise you on the next page . . . This is of course a werewolf yarn, competently told despite wearying heaps of bodies before we get any actual plot; the triumph of the cute, crippled kid detective over Incarnate Evil comes as no surprise. OK, but expensive for a short story.

For the same price you can have Terry Carr's 13 *Best SF of the Year 14* [*Gollancz* 376pp £4.95] selections – cleverly including 1984 stories which later won Nebulas (John Varley's 'Press Enter', Gardner Dozois' 'Morning Child' and Octavia Butler's 'Bloodchild') and Hugos (Varley and Butler again). I don't much like Varley's tale, whose flashy surface covers a thin and familiar technophobic theme, but most of the rest are ace stuff.

Eleven Ian Watson shorts make up *Slow Birds* [*Gollancz* 190pp £8.95], whose daft ideas are less hair-raisingly intellectual than of old – though there's some nice dottiness about a time-scoop project dredging up the philosopher Lucretius (to be amazed by Modern Science), only for Lucretian physics to come with him and invade our world. Other strangenesses include inverted, inexplicably expanded, and time-frozen worlds, a vitriolic tale of political physics which plunges Margaret Thatcher below Absolute Zero, and uneasy horror stories. Worth a look.

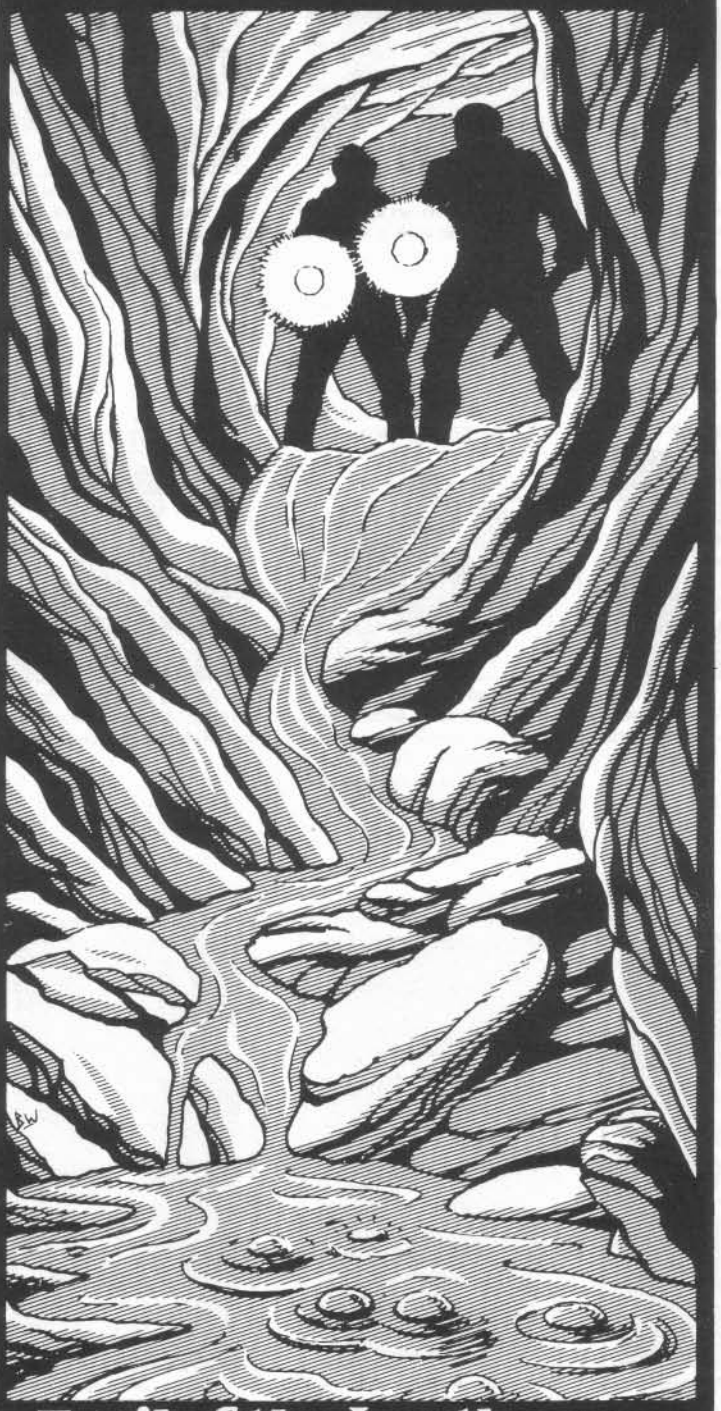
Still more shorts (19 this time): *Gene Wolfe's Book of Days* [*Arrow* 246pp £2.25]. Unclassifiable . . . some straightforward, some worrying, some enigmatic and elusive, but all beautifully written. One, light-hearted but ultimately chilling, is specially for games fans: 'How I Lost The Second World War and Helped Turn Back The German Invasion'.

Software by Rudy Rucker [*Penguin* 174pp £1.95]: the first UK appearance of this demented 1982 novel. On the surface it's a racy and blackly funny story of robots and humans-become-robots, laced with deadpan outrageousness. "'I think you should kill him and eat his brain,' Mr Frostee said quickly. 'That's not the answer to *every* problem in interpersonal relations,' Cobb said . . .'" Rucker is picking at problems of personal identity. Lose your body and re-install your software in a robot frame (complete with SEX and DRUNKENNESS subroutines), and are you still you? With destruction looming, the ex-human Cobb asks: 'Am I on tape somewhere else?' The reply is: 'I don't know . . . What's the difference?'

Philip E High's *Sold – For A Spaceship* [*Hamlyn* 'Venture 07' 175pp £1.75] is more traditional: what Orwell might have called good bad SF. High always tells the same story, beginning with rock-bottom despair amid tattered remnants of humanity. Swiftly and sometimes grammatically, the situation improves until mankind has achieved symbiosis with the ecosystem, perfect telepathic marriages with submissive womankind, and mastery of the universe. Despite writing which can only be praised as 'functional', High has qualities of excitement and compassion which make his work stand out in this series (if nowhere else).

In brief: Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Thendara House* [*Arrow* 414pp £2.75] is a late addition, worthy but ponderous, to the bulky 'Darkover' series: new readers begin elsewhere . . . *The Last Legionary Quartet* by Douglas Hill [*Pan* 460pp £2.95] offers lots of words for your money: a lightweight 'juvenile' tetralogy full of thrills, hardware and zap guns . . . Graham Dunstan Martin's *The Soul Master* [*Unicorn* 293pp £2.95]: one of *Unwin's* better fantasy discoveries, with potent and original ideas . . . *Skyfall* [*Panther* 270pp £1.95] is Harry Harrison's potboiler of space disaster and a falling super-Skylab . . . *A Pliocene Companion* by Julian May [*Pan* 220pp £2.50] is not the place to start reading Ms May (I didn't get the tetralogy to which this is a concordance), who comes over here as strangely arrogant and pretentious . . . *Granada*, mindful of past injuries, have neglected to send Asimov's *Robots and Empire*: if Ian Marsh buys me the hardback I'll give it the praise it deserves. (*Bah! Humbug! –Ed.*) □

Darkness on the edge of the world...



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Alignment: NEUTRAL Start: VILLAGE

SPECIAL ABILITIES

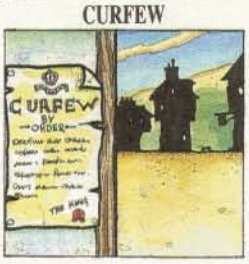
1: Instead of moving, you may fire your bow at a Character or face up Enemy card up to 3 spaces away in the same Region (not the Inner Region). The shot is resolved as Combat. If you lose, the shot missed. If you win, an Enemy is discarded (you cannot keep it towards Strength) or, if a Character, they must lose a Life.

2: You may use *Karate* when you *attack* (but not when you are attacked by) a Character. When you do so, you use your Craft against their Strength in Combat. If you win, the victim is *Stunned* and can cast no Spells until they have missed their next Turn. You may take no other reward.

OBJECTS FOLLOWERS

EVENT 1 EVENT

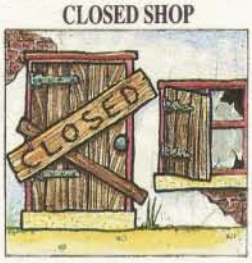
CURFEW



The military impose a curfew. All 'Place' Adventure Cards are closed for three Turns and cannot be visited by anyone landing on them or drawing one during that period. They still count as one of the Adventure cards for the space.

EVENT 1 EVENT

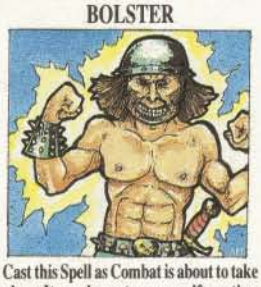
CLOSED SHOP



Business is bad. All face up 'Stranger' Adventure Cards decide to move on to the discard pile.

SPELL SPELL

BOLSTER



Cast this Spell as Combat is about to take place. It may be cast on yourself, another player or an Enemy. When cast it increases the target's Strength by the roll of one die for the duration of that Combat only.

SAMURAI

SPELL SPELL

TRANSMUTE

Cast this Spell as required. It must be cast at another player. It transmutes all their metal non-magical Swords, Axes, Armour, Shields, Helmets and Gold into wood rendering them useless. They must dump them on the discard pile.

SPELL SPELL

BLADESHARP

Cast this Spell on any Weapon as Combat is about to start. For the duration of that one Combat only, the Weapon will give an additional 2 to Strength.

SPELL SPELL

RESURRECTION

Cast this Spell as required. When cast, it permits you to take a defeated Enemy card held by another player towards gaining Strength. The resurrected Enemy will add its Strength to yours for one Combat after which you must discard it.

SPELL SPELL

ENRICH

Cast this Spell as required. When you cast it, roll 1 die and take that number of bags of Gold from the stockpile.

SPELL

SPELL

SPELL

SPELL

CHARACTER

ADVENTURE

ADVENTURE

SPELL

The Jewel in the Crown

A Look at Talisman and its New Expansion Set by Alastair Morrison

I tend to buy games for one of two reasons. Either it is a good, playable system, or it has a great box! I admit it was the second reason that initially attracted me to *Talisman*, however, once I looked inside, I discovered that not only was the artwork excellent but the game was good and playable too.

For those of you unfamiliar with the game, the board itself consists of three distinct regions. The outermost region, coloured in green, is easiest to travel through, followed by the blue middle region and the buff inner region, wherein lies your goal – the Crown of Command. In the game, each player takes on the role of a character such as a Warrior, Wizard or Priest, each of whom has special powers, and sets off on a quest to find the magic Talisman. The regions on the board are the areas of 'countryside' travelled through, and each region is actually sub-divided into squares, each of which has its own title (eg Chapel, Hills, etc) and encounter instructions. Effectively, *Talisman* is a regulated role-playing boardgame.

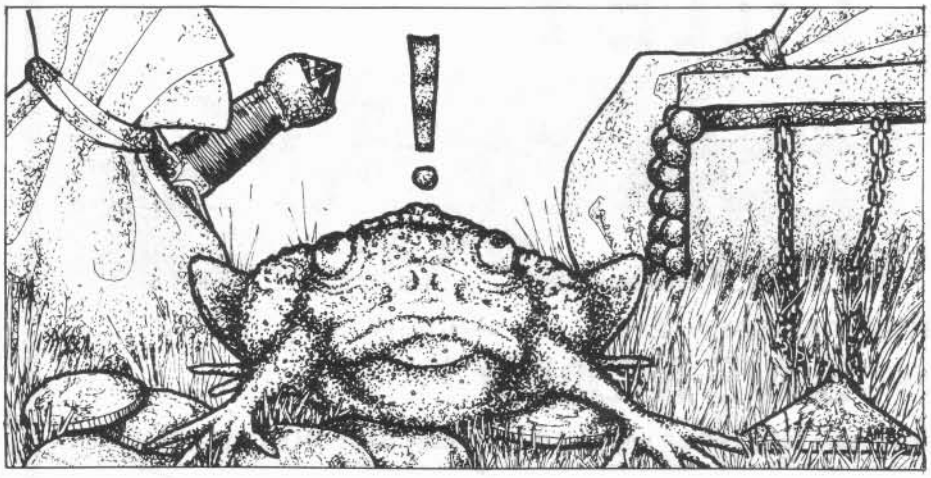
There are fourteen character cards and pieces which depict the individual adventurers: a Prophetess, Druid, Warrior, Ghoul, Priest, Wizard, Sorceress, Monk, Troll, Elf, Thief, Assassin, Minstrel and Dwarf. Each card gives details of the character's unique abilities. For example, the Prophetess can begin the game with one spell, always retain one, and look at the other players' spells at any time during the game. Character cards also show your initial Strength, Craft, Lives, Gold, Alignment and starting location.

Over a period of time, each character seems to develop its own personality, regardless of who plays them. One example is the Troll; not the most personable of characters, but one who tends to develop Massacrevellian (rather than Machiavellian) tactics. After all, why be subtle and devious when pure brute force will get you the same results – and faster!

Spell cards are another important facet of the game – each one gives specific details as to the type of spell you can cast in the course of the game. For the greedy, the Acquisition spell is a good one, although my favourite has to be Temporal Warp – a spell that enables you to take three turns in a row.

One unpleasant aspect about the game is being turned into a Toad as a result of a spell. This invariably happens when your character has acquired enough Gold to bury Fort Knox, an armoury that would overburden the hordes of Genghis Khan and enough Followers to fill a football pitch. Since a Toad cannot carry anything, all his worldly wealth remains on the space he occupied when the spell struck. This usually results in a mad scramble by the other players to be the first to reach this unexpected treasure trove. All the poor Toad can do is sit and croak his objections in vain for the next three turns.

After playing *Talisman* on numerous occasions with anything from two to six players, it becomes obvious that it is ideally suited to the three to four player game since it keeps the playing time down to about two and a half hours yet still offers an interesting challenge.



Having said this, the six-player game is perfect for role-players, allowing plenty of character interaction and development as each player seeks the Weapons, Objects and Talismans that are now in short supply. This is a game of back-stabbing, cheating and corruption, with spells, curses and blood flying across the board. An interesting variant is to have only one Talisman. The player who eventually gets it would be sure to spend most of the game being pursued by a bunch of frothing maniacs bent on grievous bodily harm (at the very least!).

The one complaint that is often levelled at card-orientated games like *Talisman* is that after numerous plays you can often predict the cards, losing the elements of spontaneity and surprise. To combat this, an expansion set has arrived on the scene, containing new Character, Spell and Adventure cards.

These additions follow the same format as the original game, with the added bonus of glorious technicolour throughout. New characters are the Halfling, Necromancer, Satyr, Leprechaun, Ranger, Amazon, Rogue, Hobgoblin, Gladiator, Knight, Barbarian, Merchant, Pilgrim and Philosopher, making twenty-eight different characters available to players. Of these newcomers, the Necromancer and the Knight can benefit from gaining Craft through Charming enemies or killing them, adding the enemy's Craft to their total. Thus these two can gain when they encounter spirits – an ability lacking in the original characters. All the new characters have a good balance of abilities, making them as playable as the original set.

The Adventure cards all add plenty of variety and sparkle to the game. To describe in length all the novelties would use up all the superlatives I know (at last count about five) so I'll just pick out a few favourites.

The Arena card allows you to move any other character to your space and then attack them. This enables you to pick on the weakest player and act very uncharitably towards him. On the subject of uncharitability there's also a Taxation card to get . . . There's also an unhelpful stranger in the form of a Judge – he can fine you or make you miss a turn if you've attacked another player during the game. Going by the way most people I know play Talisman, it's certainly a case of 'Guilty, m'lud'!

Out of nine new enemies provided, the nastiest by far has to be the Lich. If the Lich is victorious in combat, it drains one of your character's lives and keeps it for itself. This makes it a very persistent enemy, especially if encountered early on in the game whilst the player characters are still weak and inexperienced. My other favourite enemy is the Berserker who instead of being killed merely zooms off clockwise to another space, ready to bash again.

The half-dozen new spells – Displacement, Brainwave, Slow Motion, Barrier, Mind Steal and Metamorph, are all good for a bit of chaos here and there.

There is, of course, nothing to stop you adding new adventure cards or favourite character cards of your own. It is easy to adapt any character type to *Talisman*, as long as you keep within the limits of the rules, it shouldn't unbalance the game.

To use the *Talisman* cards provided on the facing page, first cut around the sheet of card backs and paste this to a sheet of thin cardboard. When the glue has dried, trim the cardboard to the size of the cards, cut out the obverse sheet and paste this to the other side of the cardboard, making sure that the two sides correspond to each other! Once dry, cut the cards out individually and use them to brighten up your game! □

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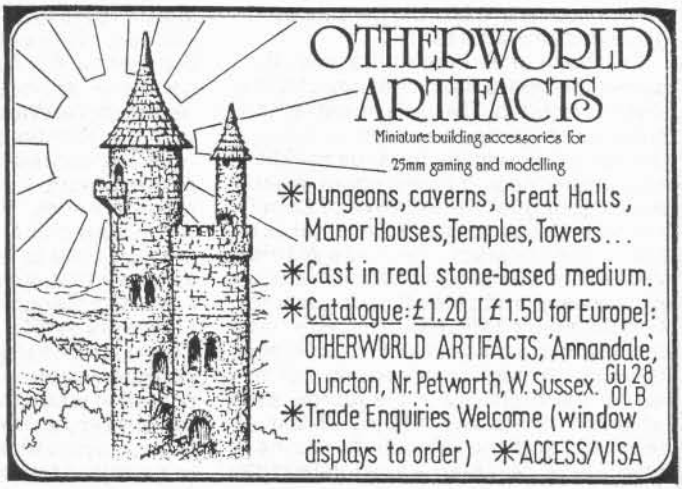

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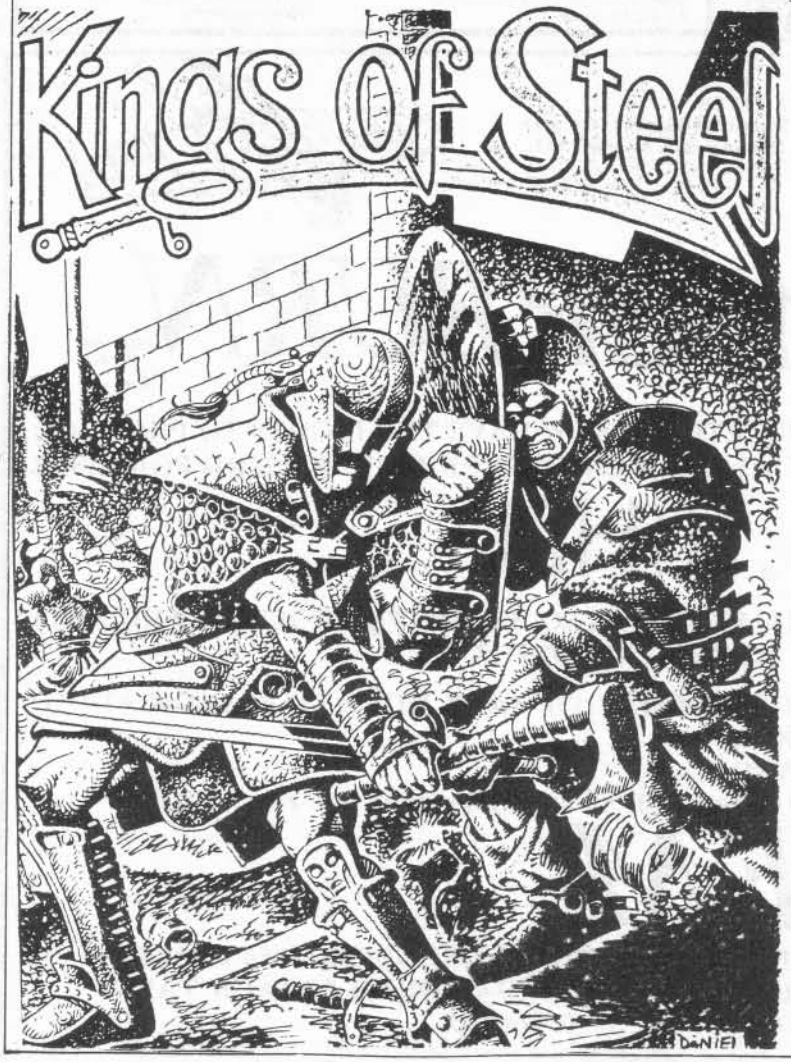

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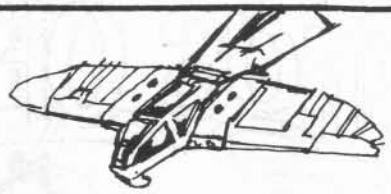

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FEAR of flying

INTRODUCTION

Most *Call of Cthulhu* campaigns involve frequent travel. This scenario should fit any campaign in which a medium to long range air journey is required. For this reason players' information has been kept to a minimum; the keeper will know where the investigators are travelling, and why.

PLAYERS' INFORMATION

You are to travel on flight 132, a Tabor airliner of the most advanced design, able to carry twelve passengers and three crew at more than a hundred miles an hour!

As the formalities are completed you see the aircraft for the first time; a fantastic triplane with six Rolls-Royce engines, taller than a house and longer than two London omnibuses. It's hard to believe that such a monster can ever leave the ground.

Walking towards the boarding ladder, you know that this will be a flight to remember.

KEEPER'S INFORMATION

The passengers about to board include a fanatical cultist, a murderer, a wealthy tycoon with a sinister past, and a private detective, plus the investigators and some innocent bystanders. Several events are suggested for the flight; the keeper should select those most appropriate to the campaign background and the skills of the investigators.

The passengers are weighed before they board. The keeper should pretend to distribute them according to weight, so that the total SIZ of passengers is spread as evenly as possible along the length, and across the width, of the aircraft. In fact this calculation should be ignored. Spread the investigators around the aircraft and ensure that one sits next to Jeremiah Stokes.

The Tabor is a huge airliner, designed as a bomber but converted to peacetime use at the end of the Great War. It holds 12 passengers and 3 crew. This version has six Rolls-Royce Eagle engines, two between the upper and middle wings and four in tandem pairs between the middle and lower wings. They are surrounded by a maze of control wires and cooling pipes, all essential to the safe operation of the aircraft, and a network of support struts and wires. An unpublicised design fault is the fact that the upper engines tend to pull the nose of the aircraft forwards and downwards. If any of the lower engines cut out, the upper engines must be throttled back. If this occurs, the aircraft will slowly lose height. Each engine (with its plumbing) has 25 hit points, but will need repairs if it takes more than 13 points of damage. The aircraft loses 10mph flying speed for each stopped engine. The wings have 150 hit points, but the aircraft loses 1d6mph for each ten points of damage they take. It will stall and crash should its speed fall below 40mph. Full technical and historical details are given at the end of the scenario.

Plan 1 shows the layout of the fuselage, which is made of laminated plywood with reinforcing ribs. The fuselage has 150 hit points, but more than 20 points of damage will seriously weaken the aircraft. Each time this occurs roll a percentile dice. If the total damage is greater than the dice roll, roll 1d20 on the table below:

01–10 No effect.
11–13 Plywood cracks. Roll for damage in each subsequent round of combat, adding 1d4 to the percentile dice roll.
14–16 Bracing wire anchorage rips free. Pilots must reduce air speed by 2d4mph.
17–19 Support strut anchorage rips free, additional damage 2d6. Pilots must reduce air speed by 3d6mph. Make another d100 roll to check for further effects.
20 Main support strut snaps. Aircraft breaks up.

Bullets causing less than 6 points of damage pass through the fuselage without affecting the total structure, and this damage need not be subtracted from the fuselage hit points. Any bullet which misses on a roll of 95 or more will hit one of the engines; the keeper should roll 1d6 for location:

1 Left upper engine
2 Right upper engine
3–4 Left tandem engines (forward/aft)
5–6 Right tandem engines (forward/aft)

The nose [**1**] contains instruments and ballast. Behind it are the two pilots, who sit in an open cockpit [**2**]. A hatch leads to the engineers compartment [**3**], which contains most of the engine controls, the wireless transmitter, a rubber life raft and hand pump, the entry hatch, and a ceiling hatch for access to the wing. If an engine fails the engineer can climb out and attempt to repair it in flight. The wireless cannot be used during take-offs or landings; it uses a wire aerial which hangs below the aircraft fuselage and is wound in at these times. A door leads back to the main cabin [**4**], equipped with wicker seats for 12 passengers. Each seat has its own window (which can be slid open) and is supplied with cushions and heavy blankets. Net racks above the seats hold hand luggage and coats. A baggage compartment [**5**] can hold up to two tons of luggage. Spaces below and behind the cabin [**6**] hold control cables, ballast, and other equipment. The fuel tanks [**7**] are below the cabin and engineers compartment.

CHARACTERS

Captain James Crichton-Smythe: Age 35, ex RFC and RAF, Senior Pilot. STR: 15; DEX: 13; INT: 11; CON: 12; APP: 10; POW: 11; SIZ: 9; SAN: 55; EDU: 13; HP: 10.
Skills: Astronomy (navigation) 35%, Electrical Repair 35%, Make Maps 25%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Photography 25%, Pilot Aircraft 55%, Speak French 25%, Speak German 15%, Revolver 35%, Vickers machine gun 35%.
Equipment: Assorted maps and charts, .38 Webley revolver.

Peter Fincham: Age 33, ex RFC (medical discharge), Co-Pilot. He was shell-shocked during the war, hence his low SAN. STR: 13; DEX: 14; INT: 12; CON: 11; APP: 15; POW: 15; SIZ: 11; SAN: 52; EDU: 13; HP: 11.
Skills: Astronomy (navigation) 25%, Dodge 35%, Electrical Repair 30%, Make Maps 15%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Pilot Aircraft 50%, Speak Arabic 35%, Revolver 35%, Rifle 30%.
Equipment: .38 Webley Revolver.

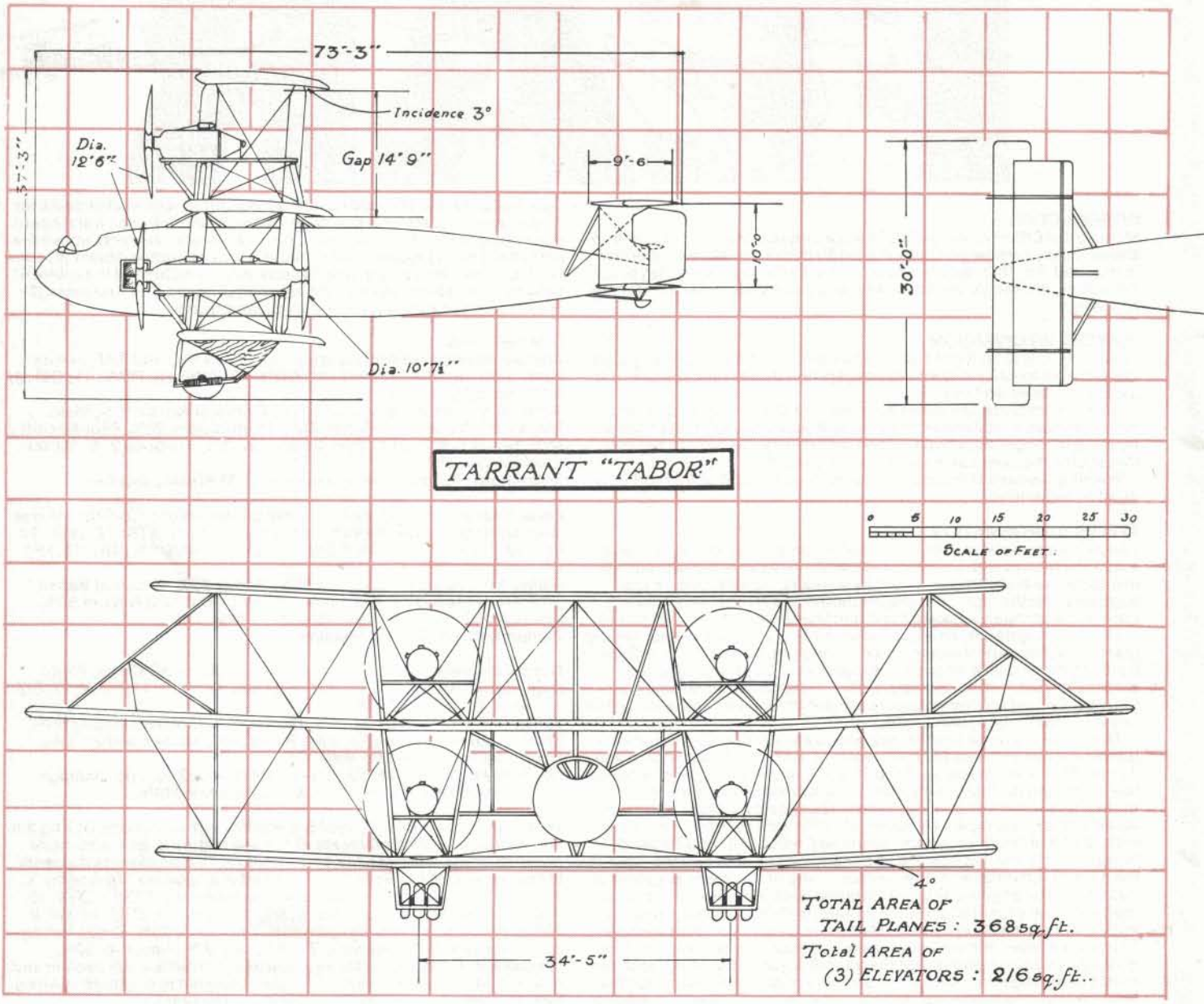
Norman Villiers: Age 40, American, ex US Army Air Corps, Flight Engineer. STR: 17; DEX: 13; INT: 12; CON: 10; APP: 11; POW: 17; SIZ: 11; SAN: 55; EDU: 10; HP: 10.
Skills: Climb 65%, Boating 25%, Dodge 46%, Electrical Repair 55%, Mechanical Repair 75%, Operate Radio 35%, Speak German 25%, Knife 35%, Revolver 30%, Rifle 25%.
Equipment: Assorted tools, flare pistol (1 shot/2 rounds, Damage 1d6+8, Base 10%, Range 10 yards), commando knife.

Jeremiah Stokes: British, age 55, a wealthy arms magnate. During the war he was a leading advocate of the use of poison gas, and made many enemies. Lately he has begun to doubt the wisdom of this work. In the last year there have been three attempts on his life, and he is travelling by air to shake off any possible assassins. STR: 8; DEX: 10; INT: 16; CON: 8; APP: 10; POW: 6; SIZ: 11; SAN: 22; EDU: 16; HP: 9.
Skills: Accounting 35%, Bargain 35%, Chemistry 25%, Credit Rating 35%, Fast Talk 35%, Law 45%, Treat Poison 20%, Revolver 30%.
Equipment: Briefcase (in the luggage rack) contains a .32 revolver and his lucky mascot, a crude wooden fetish believed to originate in Africa. **Seat D** (Note: An investigator should occupy seat C).

Aaron Jakes: Age 52, American businessman and Cultist of Azathoth. He has been sent to steal the 'mascot', so that it might be given to a more useful servant.
STR: 10; DEX: 10; INT: 15; CON: 10; APP: 6; POW: 17; SIZ: 9; SAN: 0; EDU: 15; HP: 9.
Skills: Accounting 25%, Bargain 40%, Cthulhu Mythos 23%, Credit Rating 25%, Fast Talk 20%, Law 30%, Occult 55%, Sneak 55%, Blowpipe 25%, Knife 55%, Revolver 30%.
Spells: *Dread curse of Azathoth, shrivelling, contact Azathoth, create gate.*
Equipment: Switchblade knife, .38 revolver, poison ring (potency 13 poison injected by needle; takes effect 2d6 minutes after injection, causes death or 1d6 damage if resisted; 1 dose), *Book of Eibon*. **Seat E** (Note: Investigators must *not* occupy seats F to H).

Dr Thomas Potter: Age 47, British chemist. Potter works for Stokes , but Stokes will not recognise him since he is disguised by a wig and dark glasses. During the war Potter developed a lethal nerve gas, one of the foundations of Stoke's fortune. Afterwards he realised that his work did little to advance the war, though hundreds were maimed by its effects. He became insane, and wishes to atone for his sins by killing himself and Stokes. He is responsible for the death threats and attacks.
STR: 10; DEX: 13; INT: 17; CON: 12; APP: 10; POW: 8; SIZ: 11; SAN: 14; EDU: 17; HP: 11.
Skills: Chemistry 75%, Dodge 46%, Knife 35%, Revolver 25%.
Equipment: Cylinder of nerve gas (Potency 16 poison, enough to fill the cabin completely), 2 syringes of Potency 10 poison, 2 vials of acid (Potency 8, enough to dissolve a lock or a face), .45 revolver. **Seat K.**

Arthur Mallow: Age 48, British, private detective and ex-police sergeant. Mallow is (unknowingly) employed by a Cultist, and is following the investigators. He has been told that they are art thieves. He is supposed to report their actions back to an insurance office (actually an accommodation address) in London. STR: 17; DEX: 13; INT: 12;



CON: 10; APP: 11; POW: 17; SIZ: 11; SAN: 55; EDU: 10; HP: 10.
Skills: Climb 60%, Dodge 46%, Drive Auto 30%, Law 35%, Pick Pockets 35%, Pick Locks 25%, Speak Hindi 20%, Spot Hidden 75%, Revolver 30%, Nightstick 25%, Martial Arts 25%.
Equipment: Handcuffs, .32 revolver, pocket knife, set lock picks, gloves, torch. **Seat A.**

Other passengers are unimportant, listed by seat, name, description, hit points and SAN only. They have no weapons or relevant skills. The players should not be allowed to realise that they are cannon fodder. They should be removed from this scenario where necessary to provide room for the investigators on the plane.

Seat B: Nigel Winstanley-Browne. An upper class twit. 9 hits, 40 SAN.
Seat C: Reserved for an investigator
Seat F: Letitia Templeton. A flapper. 8 hits, 35 SAN
Seat G: Jennifer Pettigrew. A honeymooner. 11 hits, 45 SAN
Seat H: Charles Pettigrew. A honeymooner. 14 hits, 55 SAN
Seat I: Oliver Colt. An American tourist. 10 hits, 80 SAN
Seat J: Professor Alex Phipps. Musicologist. 9 hits, 65 SAN
Seat K: John Banks. A chartered accountant. 11 hits, 55 SAN

THE FETISH

This crude doll is a Mythos artifact, a carving of Nyarlathotep as worshipped in Kenya (see *Masks of Nyarlathotep*). Anyone seeing it for the first time must make a SAN roll or lose 1d6 SAN, a successful roll still results in the loss of 1 SAN. Nyarlathotep can oppose POW to influence the thoughts of anyone carrying such a fetish, usually through dreams. It also drains 1 Magic Point per day. This malign influence caused Stokes to manufacture nerve gas, and is responsible for many minor cruelties of Stokes' business empire. Stokes stole the fetish in 1907.

Although Stokes is not a Cultist, Nyarlathotep was at first happy that he should own the fetish. Now he begun to resist its malign influence, and Nyarlathotep has sent Jakes to retrieve it and pass it on to another victim.

EVENTS

After the aircraft takes off, Stokes will open his case to get papers, and Jakes will confirm that he carries the fetish. The investigator in seat **C** may also Spot Hidden to see the fetish at this time; if successful he (or she) must make a SAN roll.

Jakes intends to steal the fetish, either by murdering Stokes immediately, or by waiting until the aircraft reaches its destination and burgling his room. If the investigator near Stokes seems to be taking an unhealthy interest, Jakes will delay and wait to see what happens. Mallow will also observe developments, using a small mirror (in his cigarette case) to watch the nearest investigator.

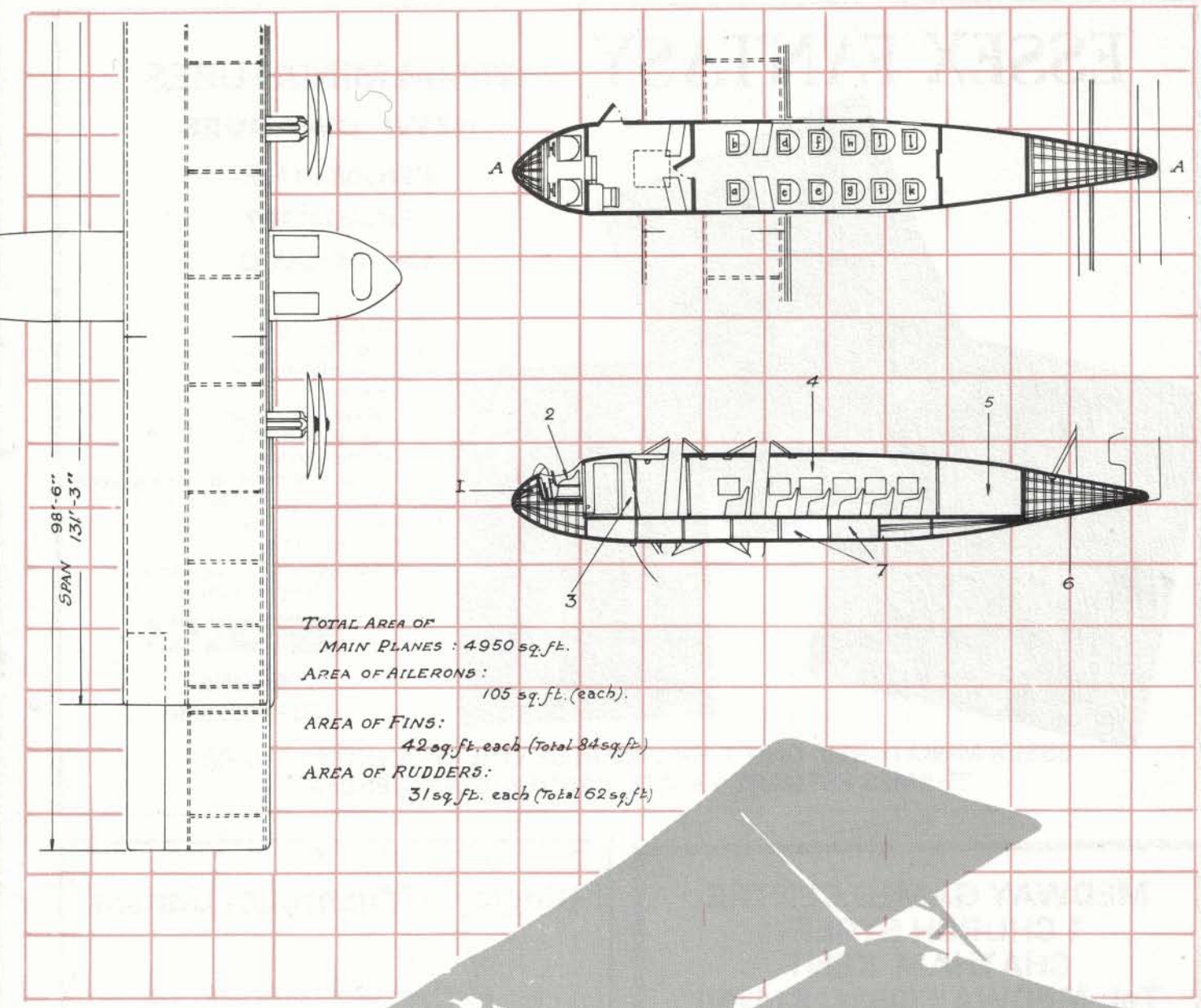
Meanwhile, Potter is summoning the nerve to confront Stokes. His gas cylinder and gun are concealed in a briefcase. Eventually he will walk forward, pretending to wish to send a radio message. When he reaches Stokes he will produce these weapons and confront his hated foe.

Luckily the valve on the cylinder is stiff, and two hands are needed to open it. Potter can't use it and hold a gun simultaneously. This gives the investigators several rounds to react to this threat, while Potter rants and tells everyone about Stoke's crimes. Stokes may respond by admitting his guilt and collapsing in a sobbing fit; an unexpected result which should leave Potter somewhat surprised.

If there is a fight, or Stokes is killed, Jakes will try to steal the fetish in the confusion.

As a last resort he will use his gun and spells to escape to the engineers compartment, kill him, and *contact Nyarlathotep*. A shantak (with average characteristics) will arrive a few minutes later, and Jakes will climb out and walk down the wing to jump onto its back. Afterwards the shantak will attempt to destroy the aircraft, to eliminate witnesses.

If the aircraft survives, Mallow will have a lot of news to report; after



the flight the investigators should gradually realise that they are seeing a lot of him. If the team have the fetish but Jakes is still alive he will undoubtedly make more attempts to recover it.

This setting gives a number of opportunities for unusual fights and confrontations (for example, a fist fight on the wing of the aircraft), and can easily be adapted to any other set of characters and degree of lethality.

Historical Background

Films and novels tend to concentrate on the glamorous Zeppelins and fighter aces of the Great War, and it's easy to forget that both sides developed heavy bombers, capable of flying hundreds of miles and delivering tons of explosives. After the war they were easily converted to passenger use. In consequence, European aircraft dominated civil aviation through most of the Twenties. Aircraft like the Handley-Page W8, Vickers Vimy, and Bristol Pullman were either converted bombers or purpose-built airliners, and could easily carry eight to fourteen passengers. By the end of the decade they (and much more advanced descendants) were spanning the deserts of Australia or Egypt, or the waters of the English Channel, with equal ease. Many were sold in America, since the US aircraft industry had never built bombers and concentrated on small aircraft for lucrative airmail runs until the middle of the decade.

By today's standards these aircraft seem primitive; wood and fabric biplanes or triplanes, with the passengers seated in wicker chairs. A common feature was the provision of ladders in the wire wing bracing, to let the crew repair the engines in flight if necessary. Maximum speed was around 80–120mph (in a good wind). Most early models lacked radio and other modern navigation aids; they followed railway lines or roads whenever possible, and trusted to luck and the compass when crossing deserts or large bodies of water. Their 'airports' were often little more than grass fields, with tents used as waiting rooms and administration buildings.

The airliner used in this scenario never flew. However, it is based on a real aircraft, a prototype heavy bomber which crashed on take-off during its first flight in November 1918, killing its pilots. The Tarrant Tabor incorporated several features which would have made it particularly suitable for airline use; the fuselage was wider than a modern Concorde airliner, it was free from the usual internal wire braces and spars, and it was built for a heavier load than any other aircraft of its day. Its main flaw was lack of power, which could have been corrected by engines which were already available when it crashed. It carried radio and other navigational aids. The builder, W G Tarrant, was never able to raise the funds to complete a second prototype, and the project died in 1919.

For this scenario it is assumed that the second prototype was completed as the first of a line of passenger aircraft, with better engines and the fuel tanks moved below the cabin floor. If completed, it would have had the following approximate specifications:

Loaded weight:	44672lb
Length:	73' 2"
Maximum width:	131' 3"
Overall height:	37' 3"
Body Diameter:	11'
Maximum endurance:	8 hours @113mph = 900 miles[1]
	12 hours @91mph = 1090 miles.[1]

[1]These figures would probably be improved for an airline model, since it would rarely fly at full loading.

I am grateful to Francois Prins, aviation photographer and journalist, for the use of diagrams and other material from his article 'Mr Tarrant's Tabor'. The modified design for passenger service is typical of the early Twenties. Other sources include: *Death in the Clouds* – Agatha Christie; *Diamonds in the Sky* – Pettifer and Hudson; *The World's Worst Aircraft* – James Gilbert; *Airliners* – Robert Wall; *Slide Rule* (Autobiography), *Stephen Morris*, and *So Disdained* – Nevil Shute. □

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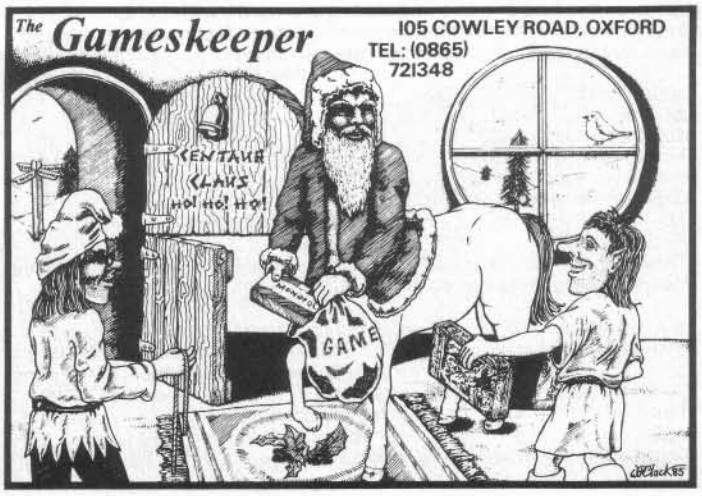

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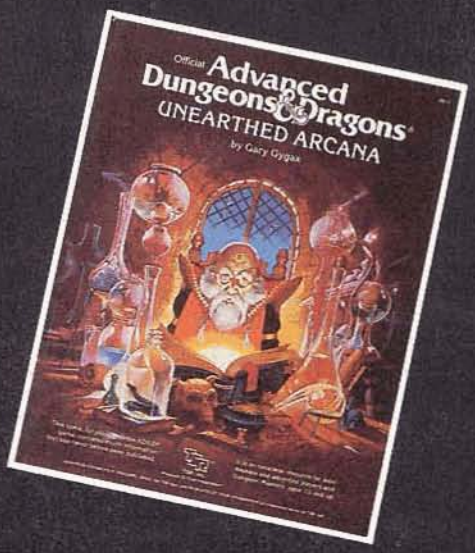

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Heroes & Villains *is a bimonthly column for players of Superhero game, edited by Simon Burley and Peter Haines.*

SCIENTIFIC METHOD

by Phil Masters

One of the most important elements in a Superheroic universe is 'SuperScience', the weird and wonderful form of intellectual endeavour which creates power armour, secret formulae, earth-shattering weapons and such trivia. It's a strange line of work, and somehow most of the experts in the field seem to be rather strange people – eccentric, if not downright mad. In fact, the mad scientist is an important figure in the super-universe, and yet such people rarely receive the respect and attention they deserve.

A case in point is Baron Frankenstein in the scenario *Strikeback* in *WD58*. A man who has succeeded in mastering scientific disciplines years ahead of his time, including the creation of artificial life, and who is required to deal with PC heroes in one way or another, is not even given the courtesy of a set of personal statistics. It could, of course, be argued that he is, genius aside, unremarkable, but this seems a little oversimplified. Mad scientists – and their merely eccentric colleagues – deserve respect and attention (it's certainly risky to annoy them), and this article seeks to bridge the gap.

Super-scientists can be divided, very approximately, into four categories. In descending order of personal power, these are Superpowered, Freelance, Sidekick, and Hireling. The first, the Superpowered, will not be discussed much here, not because such characters are unimportant – they are major figures by *any* standards – but because they are the most complex and individualised of all. These are the scientifically talented superheroes and supervillains, the ones with the *Scientist* skill in *Champions* or the *Brilliant Scientist Advantageous Background* in *Golden Heroes*, as well as a heap of other superpowers. Usually, such individuals derive their powers from devices they build themselves, such as 'power armour', although many suffer accidents in the course of their work which have beneficial side-effects. NPCs of this type are very dangerous as enemies, as they combine the power to defeat most heroes, the intelligence to hunt down opponents and attack at the right time, and the ingenuity and skill to build or devise ways of circumventing their victims' own strengths. Fortunately, most of them have their weaknesses; in particular, they tend to want their foes to appreciate their cleverness (understandably), and so they are amongst the worst gloaters of the villain world. On the side of good, a super-scientist makes a useful and versatile ally (PC or NPC), although role-playing a genius can be a challenge for any player or referee.

The Freelance, or minor-superpowered scientist is something of a neglected creature, undeservedly so. These are simply skilled scientists with the resources, individuality, or eccentricity to choose to work independently of other characters or organisations, frequently living off patent payments or royalties from their lesser inventions while seeking some great but elusive scientific objective. This is the 'dotty professor in the basement lab' syndrome, familiar in other areas besides the Superhero genre. Mostly, such scientists are harmless, but a few have illegal desires or extreme ambitions, and use their skills to create or outfit high-grade thugs or even supervillains; certainly, their laboratories are cluttered and chaotic enough to suffer a lot of accidents, which can produce super-powered beings. Some with a mercenary bent act as outfitters to underworld characters who can afford their fees; others, on the side of good, may be useful, if aggravating, friends to heroes, or may have to be saved from violent characters wishing to misappropriate their secrets. Most such Freelances can be treated as normals in most ways but some will have a few gadgets to hand which duplicate superpowers - 'just for safety'.

The Sidekick super-scientist is very much like the Freelance, but either works with an individual superbeing or holds an important position in a major agent group or organisation. Both Sidekicks in *Golden Heroes* and Competent Dependent NPCs in *Champions* can sometimes fall into this category, although one is an asset and the other is a liability; other examples include senior researchers with organisations who provide the scientific element in a campaign, such as METE (*Champions* Organisations Book 1), and the *Marvel* character *Forge* (although that mutant with sorcerous training must almost rate as a Superhero). These are major figures in a universe or campaign, but ones who are tied to some other group or body, and who lack the power to work solo (at least outside their laboratories). They often have to be protected or restrained, but their skills make it worthwhile; after all, where would the James Bond films be without Q and his criminal counterparts?

Finally, there is the Hireling-scientist, a category that shades into both the Sidekick area and the simple employee-technician. These are simply fairly 'normal' characters who possess some useful technical or scientific skills, and who act as small but useful parts of large organisations. Superpowered characters may not notice them as much more than white-coated figures running for cover when heroes raid villain bases or villains break into research labs, although they may sometimes, when seeking advice or information, find themselves having to listen to rambling but crucial lectures from 'expert' NPCs, but these hirelings *are* important. They are the basis of the power of such bodies as the *Champions* Viper and the *Marvel* AIM, and any heroic scientist character might do well to consider hiring a few for mundane tasks – quite how Reed Richards survives without them is a mystery to me.

The 'mad' scientist can be used in a wide variety of plots to help or hinder player Superheroes; GMs might like to dwell on the following plotline and experiment on their players. . . .

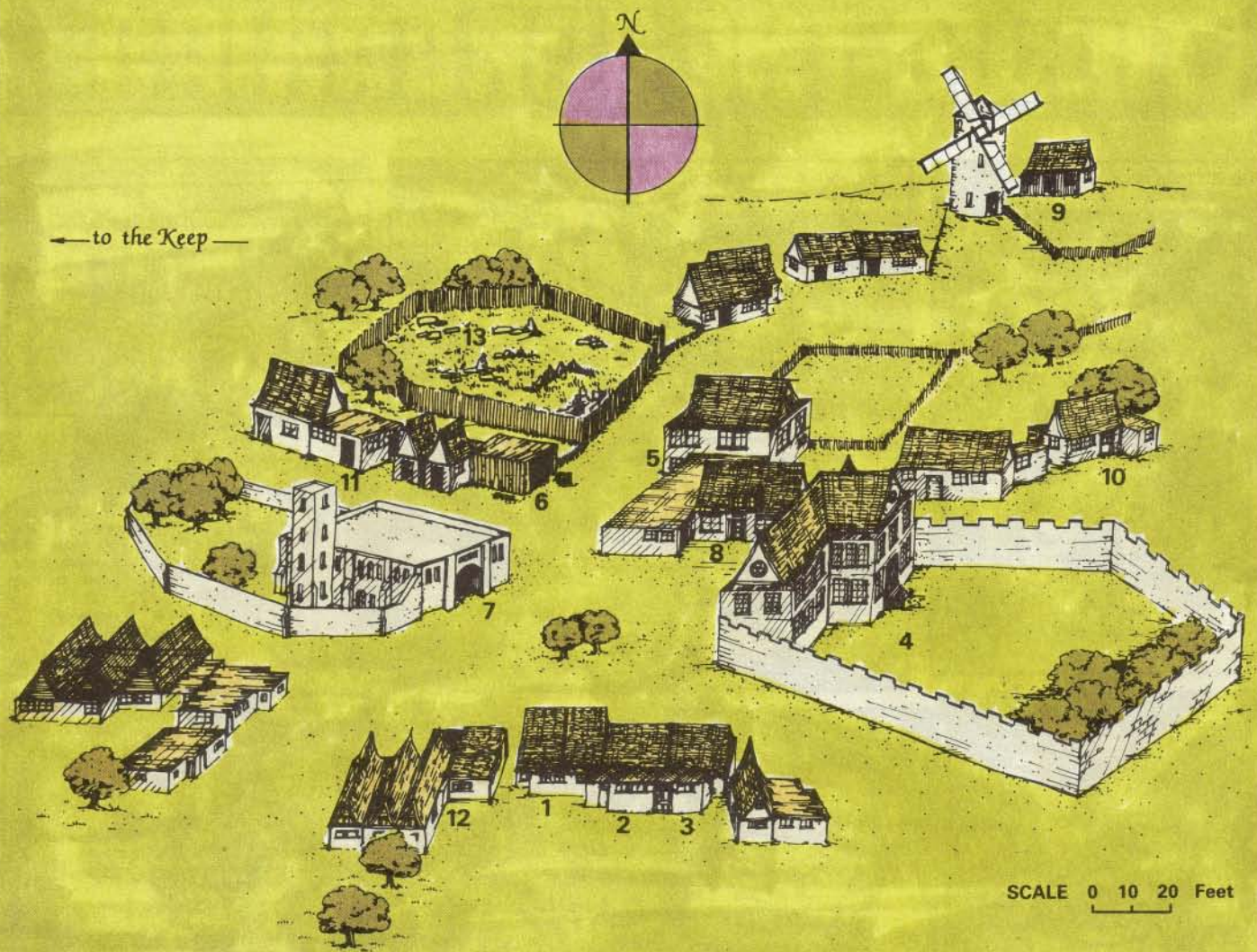
Help Wanted: The heroes are somehow alerted that one of the chief supervillain groups in your campaign have broken into the laboratory of Professor Lyall Ivansson, the genius inventor, and have every intention of forcing him to create gadgets that enhance their powers. There is no time to lose; Ivansson must be saved and villains foiled, else with the Professor's brilliance on their side they could gain power unlimited. . . .

GM's Notes: Ivansson is a freelance, and the danger is – up to a point – real; he's quite capable of cooking up something that could aid the villains. Unfortunately, things will prove a little complicated when the heroes reach his lab. Not expecting help, Ivansson has – while pretending to work on gadgets for the villains – been applying his genius for robotics, cybernetics, and computers to the problem of saving himself. Just as the heroes enter, he will press a master switch, and a room full of automatic systems programmed to defend the scientist and flatten anything else that moves will spring into life. There is *no* off-switch; the systems will run for about an hour, until their batteries die. This is going to be a three-way fight to the finish.

A Final Note

All of this discussion has been limited to the physical sciences. However, it is worth noting that minor sorcerers in supernaturally-inclined campaigns have a lot in common with scientists (the eccentricities and obsessions, the hard training), and magical analogies exist for many aspects of super-science (there are many 'branches' of both; minor spells equate to gadgets, and so on). Thus, much of what is said above can be applied to sorcery; after all, the comics' presentation of both is about equally realistic. □

THRUD THE BARBARIAN



The Necklace of Brisingamen

A Thrilling AD&D Scenario for 6-8 Characters of Levels 7-10

by Graeme Drysdale

BACKGROUND

The village of Stonehelm, although more of a hamlet than a village, grew up around a church dedicated to the goddess Freya. Pilgrims journeyed from miles around to worship at the shrine and its popularity soon became immense. As a result, the high priest's power also became very great and before long he was continually surrounded by apprentice acolytes, yearning to serve Freya. Shortly after, a small village sprouted up around the temple, which soon flourished and prospered. A retired warrior constructed a small keep on a hill that had a perfect view over the surrounding countryside to protect the burgeoning village from neighbouring provinces. This hill was shaped like a helm, so the building was called Stonehelm Keep, and hence the village acquired its name.

It was a midsummer's night when the first signs of trouble became evident. While the high priest sat in meditation, he received a vision. He beheld a horde of giants, captained by a beautiful man with golden hair, assailing a castle. In his vision he saw it as a fierce and bloody battle where even great warriors were slain fighting against such wild and savage opponents. But standing alone, in a mystical, pale yellow light, was one figure. The figure moved with extreme grace and beauty, and intermittently great balls of fire would shoot from the being's outstretched palms and explode amongst the giants below. However, opposing this being was another of great power; the golden-haired one, clad in red and black, who was creating illusions of such accuracy and realism that they terrified the enemy to little more than a quaking mass.

Soon the giants began to overpower the defenders, and the battle edged their way. It was at this point that the high priest perceived the true identities of the two leaders. The attacker was Loki, god of mischief, strife and fire; the other, whom the high priest now recognised, his goddess Freya.

The conflict was quickly over. Few of Freya's warriors remained and the goddess was severely spent. The high priest could see the necklace of Brisingamen glowing bright blue around her neck; as she released her last spells, it glowed brighter and brighter until, in a blinding flash, she was gone, taking the form of a hawk as her last warriors were slain.

In the priest's dream Freya came to him, pale and weak. She gave him the necklace of Brisingamen and told him to hide it well and guard it with his soul, for this was the item

that Loki desired and with it his power would become terrible. Then, in great haste, she was gone, taking the form of the hawk again. When the priest awoke, he found that in his right hand he clasped a beautiful blue gem and that his dream had been reality.

So the priest set about his task and hid the gem deep, deep in the ground, where only he could reach it and few knew it existed.

Three years of peace reigned, and the other villagers knew little of the high priest's meeting with Freya. But Loki had not been idle. He quickly traced the gem to the village, and knowing its whereabouts, mustered a massive army of humanoids and marched them against Stonehelm. Although the village received prior warning of the attack, they had very little time to gather arms. And so the Battle of Stonehelm Keep commenced, and it was a short and evil battle, the villagers being severely outnumbered. But just before the high priest fell, he summoned a huge earthquake, totally destroying both forces and the village. It seemed that the necklace was lost forever, buried deep beneath the earth with its allies and enemies.

Years later, people once again began to settle on the site of the original village. Rumour had also spread that its former wealth had been buried in the earthquake ages before. So small groups of treasure seekers and miners also joined the village. Despite their efforts, they found nothing. They came in groups and left in hordes, less wealthy than before. It seemed that the earthquake had destroyed everything.

It was fifty years later that a pair of adventurers had the first stroke of luck. They discovered a flight of steps leading down from the original position of the temple of Freya. At this point a new shrine had been built, also dedicated to the goddess. The adventurers informed the village of their find and the following day descended the steps – never to return. To make matters worse, villagers and livestock began to disappear shortly afterwards. Figures were seen at night and weird noises were sometimes heard. Villagers soon began to leave; the entrance to the dungeon was closed and a watch was organised. The number of disappearances lessened, but nevertheless still occurred. Finally, the temple of Freya was knocked down, the entrance sealed magically, and the area blessed and sprinkled with holy water. This seemed to rid the village of its curse.

Two decades later, the villagers have seen fit to erect another temple. However, because of the village's notorious past, it is now sparsely populated, most people having migrated to less perilous regions. It seems that the curse that lay on the village not only affected the area around it, but the inhabitants as well. The village of Stonehelm is like a ghost town. The villagers are strangely dour and ill-disposed towards visitors; none are unaffected by the village's past. Of those who dare to venture into the hamlet, few return. There is a rumour that the god Loki now controls the villagers, but nothing is known for certain. What is known, however, is that somewhere, deep down within the earth, lies the necklace of Brisingamen, still untouched and still unfound. If Loki were to possess the gem he could rule the universe and all would be chaos; if it could be retrieved and returned to Freya, he would surely be defeated and peace would again reign.

PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

The history of the village of Stonehelm is known to many, and you are no exception. Having almost reached the peak of your professional career, you have decided to penetrate the village of Stonehelm and snatch the necklace of Brisingamen from Loki's outstretched palms. Guided only by the notorious history of the village and the rumours you have picked up on your many travels, you must act swiftly, and succeed, lest the forces of good be crushed forever.

Rumours

The following information can be gleaned from sources on the journey to Stonehelm:

1. The villagers who dwell in Stonehelm are strange and ill-disposed towards strangers. Some are said to be under the control of Loki. (True.)

2. The farmers' harvest has been very poor of late. (True.)

3. The necklace of Brisingamen is said to be guarded by the undying spirit of the high priest who once hid it. (True.)

4. The villagers obtain their water from a subterranean stream that flows beneath the village. (True.) This water is contaminated by a mild drug which destroys brain cells and turns those drinking it senile within a week. (False.)

5. The mutilated body of a man was discovered in the woods to the north-east of the village. (True.)

6. Huge flying creatures have been seen circling the village at night, especially during the periods of the full moon. (False.)

THE LANDS AROUND STONEHELM

When the earthquake destroyed the village at the Battle of Stonehelm Keep, great fissures tore the land apart, swallowing all in their wake. One such crevice opened up directly beneath the keep, ripping the building apart and destroying more than half of it. What remains there today is just a mound of rubble. The land around the village also shows signs of terrible scarring. The profile of the area is strange; the valley now appears as an open 'U' shape and demonstrates unusual qualities, such as the disappearance of the stream below the land, down a naturally-carved pothole some two miles north-east of the village. This stream runs under the village and emerges on the western slope of Stonehelm knoll. It is possible to enter the dungeon complex via this stream, but being fully subterranean and flowing for a full two miles before it enters the dungeon, the characters must use breathing apparatus or perish. The current is very strong, and any person hastily diving into the stream without taking any precautions, will be swept away and drowned. The underground complex cannot be reached from the western stream exit. (The stream enters the dungeon at location **8**, level **1**.)

THE VILLAGE OF STONEHELM

1. Blacksmith. Bellar 'the stump' is a one legged, ex-mercenary soldier, now retired after the loss of his left leg at the knee. He proclaims that he lost it during one of his numerous heroic missions as a spy/swashbuckler. However, it is common knowledge that the wound was caused by an unfortunate encounter with a horse and cart after a heavy drinking session in the Stonehelm Inn. Due to his inebriated state at the time, he cannot remember exactly how the accident occurred, and therefore produces a different story each time he's asked!

Bellar has a dwarven accomplice, Thrim, who continues the work while Bellar is not sober (which is frequently; if he is not drunk he is hungover and in an ugly mood). Neither dwarf is in league with Loki.

Bellar the Stump: AC10; LVL5; HP35; Fighter; Dwarf; CG; STR:16; INT:8; WIS:7; DEX:5; CON:15; CHA:8. Crutch (1d6 damage); +2 *Dagger*: 560gp, 65pp. XP 360.
Thrim: AC8; LVL1; HP11; Fighter; Dwarf; CG; STR:15; INT:11; WIS:12; DEX:10; CON:16; CHA:9. Hammer; leather apron and leggings; 35gp, 60pp. XP 50.

Both Thrim and Bellar attend church services. Both will aid a party in any way they can without endangering their lives.

2. General Store/Pawnshop. This shop is owned by Carwyn and Shoeba Atorin, two married, middle-aged humans who are in the service of Loki. The shop sells most types of provisions except fresh meats and dairy produce. General hardware is also stocked. The shop will buy almost anything for 10-40% its actual value and sell such items for their true worth. All other goods are sold at 150% of their value in the *Players Handbook*.

Carwyn: AC8; LVL7; HP20; Illusionist; Human; CE; STR:10; INT:17; WIS:15; DEX:16; CON:12; CHA:15. Black and red robes; *Potion of Undead Control*; *Scroll* of *spectral force*; +2 *Dagger* (+3 *vs Good Beings*); 750gp, 50pp. XP 1125.

Spells: 1st level – *gaze reflection, light, change self*. 2nd level – *mirror image, improved phantasmal force*. 3rd level – *paralysis, suggestion*.

Carwyn's dagger is a special weapon and has the following abilities: INT:15; EGO:10; CE alignment; *detect shifting rooms* in 2" radius; *detect good* in 1" radius; speaks halfling, goblin, common and alignment tongue.

Shoeba: AC4; LVL4; HP18; Thief; Human (female); CE; STR:10; INT:16; WIS:13; DEX:18; CON:11; CHA:16. Sling; 3 daggers; black leather armour; thieves' tools; +2 *Longsword*; *Boots of Elvenkind*; 45sp, 35gp, 12pp, 2 pearls (100gp each). XP 220.

Arron: AC1; LVL7; HP58; Fighter; Human; N; STR:17; INT:10; WIS:10; DEX:16; CON:15; CHA:10. Long composite bow; +2 *Battle Axe*; +2 *Chain Mail*; 22sp. XP 1030.

Arron is a charmed fighter who acts as both bodyguard and servant to Carwyn and Shoeba. They, however, will claim that he is their cousin, whom they are looking after.

3. Baker. Due to the poor harvest, the output from the bakery has been severely reduced. Prices have also risen to three times the normal. The baker, Morran (LVL0, HP5) is extremely depressed and spends much of his time in the Stonehelm Inn.

4. Manor. The manor house is one of the largest buildings in the village, bordered by high walls of stones. It houses Caveran the Mayor who is responsible for the upkeep of the village.

Caveran is a short stocky man with a round smiling face. He runs the village well and is just and fair. However, if any of the villagers not under Loki's control are questioned, they will tell the party that Caveran has not been himself lately. In the last month little has been seen of him, and when he has been seen he says few words and walks away briskly. Needless to say, those in Loki's service will claim they have noticed no difference in Caveran, who appears as normal as he has always been.

The truth is that the real Caveran was abducted over a month ago and his body was mutilated and dumped in the woods to the north-east, quite unrecognisable when the villagers eventually discovered it. The Caveran whom the villagers know as their mayor is an imposter, and those in Loki's service know this. The imposter is Barjil, a fire giant, who is in the service of Loki. He manages to maintain the form of Caveran by using the *Necklace of Loki*.

Barjil: AC3; HD11+2-5; HP72; Fire Giant; Att 5-30; hurl rocks (2-20), impervious to fire; INT: average-low; LE; XP 3852; [*MM*].

The *Necklace of Loki* is a magical item in the shape of a fiery flame of gold attached to a golden chain. The necklace allows any worshipper of Loki wearing it to transform their body shape to any human or demi-human size and also to be able to mimic the appearance of beings as convincingly as a doppleganger (*MM*). The time to perform this transformation is one round and it will last until the wearer deliberately changes back to his own form or the *Necklace* is removed. The *Necklace* also allows Loki to read the mind of

the person wearing it. If a non-worshipper of Loki dons the necklace, it becomes a *Necklace of Strangulation* (*DMG*).

5. The Stonehelm Inn. Despite the size of the village, the Stonehelm Inn is always busy. Not only is it frequented by the villagers, passing merchants, and farmers from the lands around, but also by people from greater distances. The great attraction is the beer, a delight discussed for many leagues, brewed by the barman himself. The beer is extra-potent stuff and any unwary characters may find themselves under the table before they know what's hit them! A local saying states: 'They dunnut call it t' Stoned-'elm Inn f' nu'ing!'

The inn is owned by the Belfy family, which is comprised of the landlord, Starren (LVL0, HP6), his wife, two sons (LVL0, HP5,4), and his two daughters. Their prices are 150% of normal. They will have accommodation for 10 visitors, at 2gp per head per night.

The daughters of Starren, Sharla and Felia, are devoted clerics of Loki and completely under his influence.

Sharla: AC−1; LVL9; HP55; Cleric; Human (female); CE; STR:12; INT:15; WIS:17; DEX:9; CON:15; CHA:13. +2 *Mace*; +2 *Plate Mail*; +1 *Shield*; helm; obsidian unholy symbol (150gp); ceremonial robes (black, embroidered with red flame); 190sp, 75gp. XP 3170.

Spells: 1st level – *command, cure light wounds, detect good, fear, sanctuary, protection from good*. 2nd level – *hold person (×2), know alignment, silence 15' radius, resist fire*. 3rd level – *continual light, blindness, dispel magic, prayer*. 4th level – *cure serious wounds, sticks to snakes*. 5th level – *flame strike*.

Felia: AC4; LVL6; HP30; Cleric, Human (female); CE; STR:15; INT:10; WIS:15; DEX:10; CON:15; CHA:13. Lucern hammer; +1 *Chain Mail* (under red and black ceremonial robes); helm; sardonyx unholy symbol (300gp); 30gp. XP 765.

Spells: 1st level – *cure light wounds* (×2), *light, resist cold, putrefy food and water*. 2nd level – *animate dead, dispel magic*.

All those who drink and work at the inn will say little of the village's past. If the characters ask them any such questions, they will only tell what the characters already know, as detailed in the background. The bartender, his wife, sons, and any other devotee of Freya present in the inn may mention that another person, a newcomer to the village, has been asking similar questions. The man, whom they know as Falcon, is working at a farm a few leagues away but frequents the inn most evenings. The barmen will offer to point him out to the characters next time he arrives at the inn.

The villagers are under the belief that Falcon is a farm labourer who has been working for about a month on the farm to the north. He is in fact an adventurer, and a worshipper of Freya, who came to Stonehelm in order to try and find out as much as he could about the area. Falcon knows little more than the characters though. However, he has realised that something is terribly wrong, and will immediately wish to join the party once he hears of their quest.

Falcon: AC−1; LVL8; HP80; Ranger; Human; NG; STR:18/63; INT:15; WIS:16; DEX:16; CON:18; CHA:14. Long composite bow; 15 arrows; 5 silver-tipped arrows; dagger; +1 *Flame Tongue Bastard Sword* (used two-handed); +4 *Mithril Chain Mail*; *Boots of Striding and Springing*; 15gp. XP 2460.

Spells: 1st level – *speak with animals*.

The DM should note that Falcon is no fool. He will not be made 'use' of, or be used as cannon fodder. He should be as careful as the other characters and will in no circumstances risk his neck, except in the most crucial of situations.

6. Stables. The business here is poor. There will be 2-10 horses of all types in the stable, but most of them will be either working or draught-horses. The owner (LVL2, Fighter, HP10) is non-committal and dour, but is not under the influence of Loki.

7. Temple of Freya. The temple is a relatively new building, only 20 years old, but is ill-kept and overgrown. Many of the farmers fear this is the reason for the community's poor harvest as the religion seems to be slowly dying out. Nevertheless, none of them will volunteer to tend the church gardens. This is left to the priestess, Aslani Curodoer, and her assistants.

Aslani Curodoer: AC10; LVL7; HP33; Cleric; Human (female); NG; STR:8; INT:15; WIS:17; DEX:9; CON:9; CHA:12. Staff; *Staff of Curing* (15 charges); *Scroll* of *dispel magic, locate object, raise dead*; ceremonials (yellow, embroidered with gold falcons); 330gp, 2 pearls (1000gp each). XP 1155.

Spells: 1st level – *bless, cure light wounds* (×2), *remove fear, resist cold*. 2nd level – *augury, hold person, resist fire, silence 15' radius, slow poison*. 3rd level – *cure blindness, cure disease, dispel magic*. 4th level – *neutralise poison*.

Aslani is old and senility is creeping in. She has held the post of priestess for 20 years and has a wide knowledge of the area and its past. She has become increasingly aware of the declining number attending her services, but is now sure why this is: she believes it is linked with Loki. Though she believes any attempt to retrieve the necklace futile, she will aid good parties in any way she can.

Assisting Aslani are two acolytes, clad like her and also carrying staffs. One of them is a servant of Loki and reports her activities to the mayor. He will try to be present when the characters meet her.

2 Acolytes: AC10; LVL1; HP7,4; Cleric; Human; CE, NG. Staff.

8. Butcher. The butcher (LVL0, HP7) is a large man with a good reputation for his work. However, he is under the influence of Loki and does not care much for adventurers. He is often seen talking with Tarataff, the tailor (**10**).

9. Miller. The mill is a relatively new development in the village. It is owned by Ferrano and his son, Wynch. If Ferrano looks a nasty piece of work, Wynch looks doubly so! The two have access to the dungeons below the village via a trapdoor in their cellar. Ferrano is the chief priest of Loki and it is his job to see that the ceremonies progress in the appropriate manner. Wynch is responsible for the sacrifice which must be burnt annually on the holy day. Ceremonies take place once a month.

Ferrano: AC3; LVL9; HP44; Cleric; Human; CE; STR:15; INT:10; WIS:14; DEX:12; CON:9; CHA:8. Mace; hammer; plate mail (worn under black and scarlet cloak); *Candle of Invocation* (*CE*); 53gp, 20pp. XP 2566.

Spells: 1st level – *command* (×2), *cure light wounds (×2), protection from good, light*. 2nd level – *hold person, know alignment, resist fire, snake charm*. 3rd level – *blindness, dispel magic, locate object*. 4th level – *cure serious wounds, poison*. 5th level – *slay living*.

Wynch: AC2; LVL6/7; HP50; Fighter/Assassin; Half-Orc; CE; STR:16; INT:12; WIS:7; DEX:14; CON:17; CHA:7. Longbow; 20 arrows; dagger; +2 *Bastard Sword* (black blade, used two-handed); +2 *Banded Armour*; full helm, 2 vials insinuative poison type C; ornate sacrificial dagger (200gp); 200sp, 70gp. XP 1800.

10. Tailor. This is run by Tarataff, his son (LVL0, HP5) and two daughters (LVL0, HP3,2). All are under the influence of Loki.

Tarataff: AC6; LVL7; HP30; Thief; Human; CE; STR:9; INT:15; WIS:7; DEX:16; CON:15; CHA:12. Longsword; 4 daggers; leather armour (under white tunic and breeches); thieves' tools; gold ring (120gp); 750sp, 50ep, 75gp, 12pp. XP 850.

11. Tanner. Balsby is the tanner. Trade has been very poor of late and his house has become ill-kept and run-down. He works here with his wife (LVL0; HP3) and two daughters, Freyda and Anoa. Balsby is in league with the millers, Ferrano and Wynch (**9**), but his wife and daughters have not fully realised this as Balsby is not CE, even though he is tending towards this alignment. Balsby has been led to believe that to resist the forces of evil would be foolish but if he co-operates he may be rewarded with fantastic wealth; and poor Balsby's pea-sized brain fully accepts this as the truth!

Balsby: AC4; LVL5; HP25; Thief; Human; CN; STR:10; INT:5; WIS:3; DEX:17; CON:15; CHA:12. Broadsword; 2 daggers; sling, *Ring of Feather Falling*; 15gp. Balsby is an excellent woodsman – treat all related abilities as if he were a 7th level ranger. XP 375.

Freyda: AC3; LVL4; HP32; Fighter; Human (female); NG; STR:14; INT:10; WIS:10; DEX:15; CON:15; CHA:12. Longsword; shortbow; 20 arrows; *Bracers of Defence AC4*; yellow tunic and skirt, white robe; pearl necklace (3000gp); 10gp. XP 290.

Anoa: AC1; LVL6; HP44; Ranger; Half-Elf (female); CG; STR:16; INT:14; WIS:15; DEX:15; CON:16; CHA:14. Longbow; 20 golden-flighted arrows; dagger; +1 *Longsword*; +2 *Chain Mail* (under yellow robe, embroidered with gold silk in the shape of a falcon); shield; 50gp, 13pp. She has a further 2000gp, 500pp and five 500gp gems hidden in the house.

Anoa is the illegitimate child of Balsby and an elven maiden. She is very proud, haughty and quick to anger, she dislikes most men and hates evil. Knowing that there is something wrong in the village, Anoa feels powerless to do anything on her own; she would certainly join a party of good characters intent on dealing with the problem. She is extremely devoted to Freya.

12. Carpenter. The carpenter is one of fine quality and does all his work at twice the normal price. He has 5 boys who help him (LVL0; HP5,3,3,3,2). He is a worshipper of Freya and has not yet been converted by Loki.

Carpenter: AC8; LVL4; HP21; Fighter; Human; NG; STR:14; INT:9; WIS:10; DEX:13; CON:12; CHA:11. Battle axe; leather overalls and trousers; gold armband (75gp); 70gp.

13. The Old Temple Area. This area is cordoned off by an 8' high wooden fence. The area marks the site of the old temple which was knocked down some 40 years ago. It is never entered by any of the villagers; the area is said to be cursed and the dungeon entrance sealed with strong magic.

The area is choked with rubble and weeds through which there is no discernible path. It appears that the northern section was the graveyard, while the southern was the land on which the church was build. There is a huge stone door in the ground here which opens to reveal steps descending into the earth; the door requires 16+ strength to open it. It is, however, protected by a number of spells: two fire *glyphs of warding*, cast by a 7th level cleric (for 28 points of damage) will explode as the door is opened, and a futher *glyph of lightning* (for 14 points of damage) will be triggered halfway down the stairs. The stairs enter the underground complex at location **1**, level **1**.

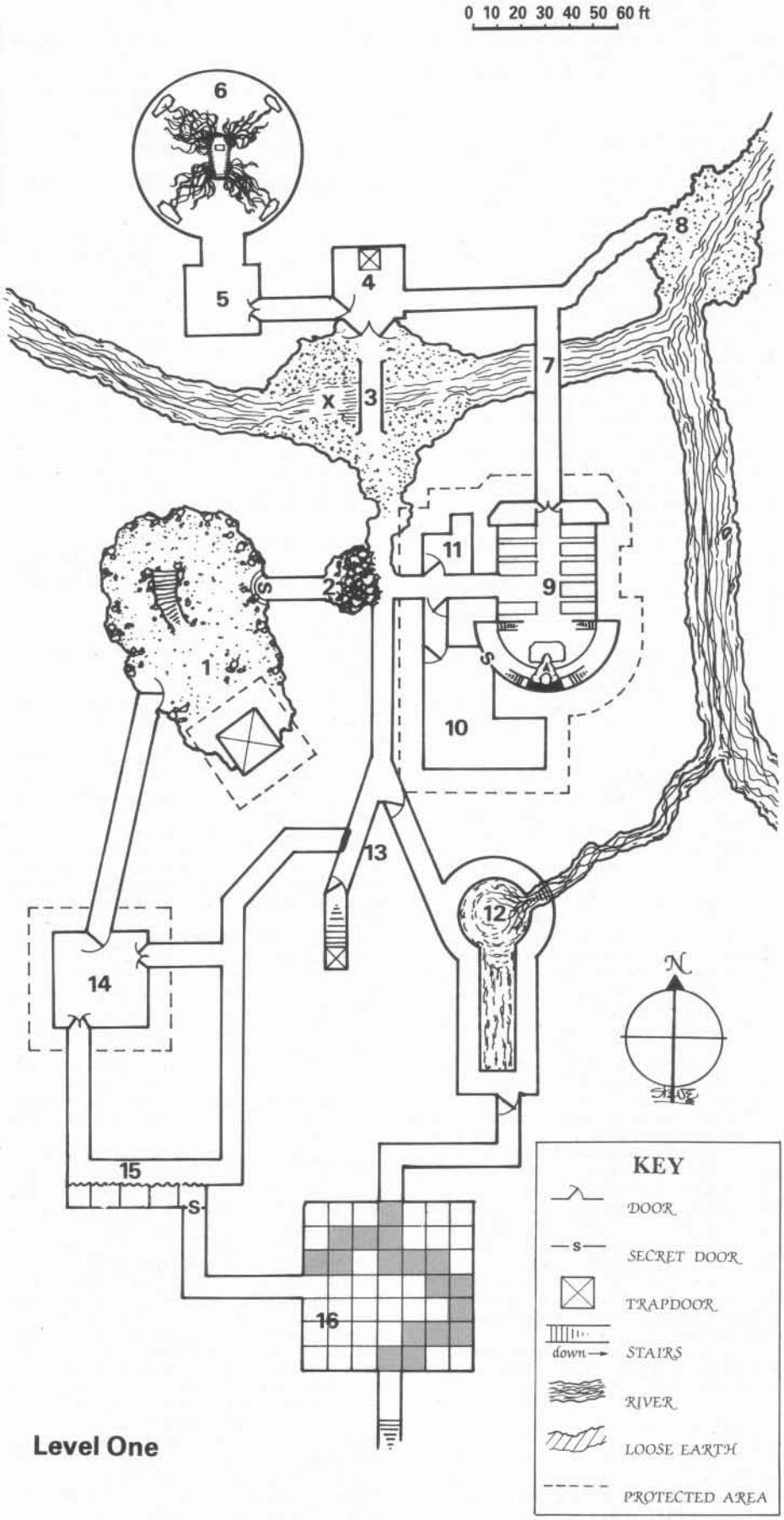
If the characters enter the graveyard at night, they will be attacked by 6 ghouls: AC6;

HD2; HP13 each; Att; 1-3/1-3/1-6; paralysis; CE; XP 81 each; [*MM*].

Two rounds later, the party will be attacked by two spectres: AC2; HD7+3; HP39,34; Att 1-8; energy drain; LE; XP 2050, 1980; [*MM*].

BENEATH THE TEMPLE

Note: there are no wandering monsters in the dungeon, although certain monsters may be attracted by fighting or similar events. The exact details of any such encounter are left to the individual DM's discretion.



Level One

Level 1

1. The stairs descend from the graveyard above into a rough cut cavern approximately 50' by 90'. The cavern is dank and musty and loose soil covers the floor in dense layers. Splintered bones and shattered pieces of rotting wood protrude through the earthern floor, and showers of fresh soil fall frequently from the ceiling 15' above, and settle lightly on the ground below. A golden water trough in the shape of a lion's head is fixed to the eastern wall but it is dry and half filled with dirt. A long lever once pumped out water through the lion's mouth.

If the lever is pulled, a loud crash will fill the room as the door at the top of the stairs swings shut, blocking out any natural light and causing a shower of earth to fall on the party. Simultaneously, two thuds will be heard and the characters will see two zombies shuffling towards them. These zombies were lying on two concealed trapdoors in the roof of the cavern which the movement of the level unlocked, thus sending the zombies hurtling to the floor. There are eight other such trapdoors in the cavern roof and two will be open each round thereafter. The list of monsters which will come tumbling out to attack the characters are given below. (Their hit points have already been adjusted for the fall.)

Round 1: 2 zombies; AC8; HD2; HP11,9; Att 1-8; N; XP 42,38; [*MM*].

Round 2: 2 sons of Kyuss; AC10; HD4; HP24,19; Att 1-8; disease; CE; XP 311,291; [*FF*].

Round 3: 2 wights; AC5; HD4+3; HP29,26; Att 1-4; energy drain; LE; XP 685, 670; [*MM*].

Round 4: 2 mummies; AC3; HD6+3; HP48,45; Att 1-12; disease, fear; LE; XP 1486, 1430; [*MM*].

Round 5: 2 spectres; AC2; HD7+3; HP48,45; 1-8; energy drain; LE; XP 2130, 2100; [*MM*].

Once the undead have been destroyed, the lever may be pulled again, whereupon the lion trough will slide to the right to reveal a passageway running due east for 30' to a closed door.

Half buried in the south-east corner is the pinnacle of what appears to be an old bell tower. It is in fact the tower of the old temple of Freya, which remained intact after the earthquake, as did the rest of the church (see level **2**, room **5**). The tower is square-shaped with a four-sided sloping roof which rises to a point. Access may be gained to the interior of the tower by an arched window on the north-eastern facet. The inside is empty but for a brass bell hanging from the roof and a rope attached to it which passes through a one inch diameter hole in the stone floor. A stone trapdoor in the floor of the bell tower allows access to the lower portion of the church, but the trapdoor has been *wizard locked* by a magic-user of 8th level. The tower is surrounded by a *protection from evil* spell.

2. At this point the corridor appears to have been widened and then plugged full of rocks and boulders. The blockage is 25' thick and reaches to the height of the ceiling. It would take 8 characters approximately 9 hours to clear it, assuming they have the appropriate tools to do so. Alternative methods would be to use *dimension door, passwall, teleport, rock to mud, stone to flesh*, and other spells of this nature.

3. A black bridge of granite spans a dark, fast flowing river. The bridge is 20' long with wooden hand rails each side, and is extremely sturdy. Four torches light the area, two on each of the southern and northern walls, sending bizarre shadows dancing in the dim firelight. At the point marked 'X' on the map, suspended 10' above the stream, are a small golden gong and gong-stick swaying gently in the breeze.

The subterranean stream acts as a wind tunnel, and every 2 rounds a great gust of wind will sweep through the tunnel, knocking any-

body off their feet who happens to be crossing the bridge at that instant (save vs DEX on 1d20 to stay on bridge). The wind will also sound the suspended gong, which then informs those who know of its purpose that they have two minutes to cross the bridge safely. Those hurled into the river will be swept away and drowned unless they have a strength in excess of 12, in which case they can tread water for as many rounds as their strength is in excess of 12 (treat each 10% of exceptional strength as 1 extra round). Only those with an 18 strength may swim against the current, and then only very slowly (about 2"). Lurking in the cold waters are a shoal of quippers:

20 quippers: AC8; HD½; HP2 each; Att 1-2; N; XP 7 each; [*FF*].

Characters wearing armour weighing more than 20lbs will sink straight to the bottom, 10' below. In such cases, and when characters are swept away by the river, no damage will be taken in the first round, but 10HP will be taken in the second round, and by the third round the character will be reduced to 0HP. All drowning characters, whatever their race, will be dead after four rounds.

4. This dimly lit chamber contains only a few bags of mouldy grain and a barrel of water. In the centre of the northern wall iron rungs ascend to a trapdoor which leads into the mill above. The rungs look well used; the trapdoor is bolted shut.

5. In the centre of this room stands a 12 inch diameter, 4' high pedestal of marble, fixed to the floor. On the top of the pedestal, resting on a red velvet cushion, is a pulsing human heart, encased in a dome of *glassteel* (AC1) which is fixed to the top of the pedestal. The heart emits a faint red glow. Inscribed on a plaque beside the cushion, in the common tongue, is the following:

'Here lies the life blood of Arun-al-Cosack, servant of Loki, in which rests his soul for all eternity, forever living, but never alive'.

The heart contains the life of Arun-al-Cosack, a mummy (room **6**). Access to the heart may be gained only by breaking the *glassteel* dome, which may withstand up to 20HP of damage. However, if the dome is not broken on the first blow (simultaneous blows from other characters are possible) a *Cube of Force* (*DMG*) will spring up around the pedestal. The actual cube is embedded within the pedestal and activates upon receiving the shock waves caused by a blow of any sort. It has 36 charges and uses 6 per turn by keeping out all attack forms, however, certain spells will harm it (*DMG*). Also, as soon as the cube is activated, Arun-al-Cosack will animate, as will his minions, and they will attack the party.

If the *glassteel* dome is destroyed with one blow, or as soon as the cube is penetrated and the dome broken, the heart will explode as an 8-dice fireball. The mummy of Arun-al-Cosack will then slowly wither and crumple into a small pile of dust.

6. This is the tomb of Arun-al-Cosack, servant of Loki. The room is circular with a domed ceiling and smells strongly of decay. A mosaic of a four-pointed flame is inset in the floor of the domed chamber. At the point of each flame is a stone coffin, and in the centre of the design lies a beautifully crafted sarcophagus. The whole room is warded by a *protection from good* spell.

In each of the coffins on the points of the flame lies a mummy.

4 mummies: AC3; HD6+3; HP46,42,40,35; Att 1-12; fear, disease; LE; XP 1518, 1486, 1470, 1430; [*MM*].

The mummies are the same as normal *AD&D* mummies except they are turned as ghosts while Arun-al-Cosack still lives. The latter resides in the beautiful sarcophagus, and he and the mummies will animate if any character steps onto the flame mosaic, if the pedestal in room **5** is struck, or if his sarcophagus is interfered with.

Arun-al-Cosack: 'mummy'; AC0; HD11; HP70; Att 3-18; fear, disease; CE; XP 8320. Spells: 1st level – *curse, cause light wounds, detect good, light, protection from good, fear, sanctuary*. 2nd level – *hold person* (×3), *know alignment, resist fire, silence* 15' radius (×2). 3rd level – *animate dead, blindness, dispel magic* (×2), *curse*. 4th level – *poison* (×2), *protection from good 10' radius, sticks to snakes*. 5th level – *flame strike, slay living*. 6th level – *harm*.

Arun-al-Cosack was a loyal cleric of Loki but died during the Battle of Stonehelm Keep. Knowing Arun's desire to live forever and to wreak havoc on the Prime Material plane, Loki granted him eternal life in mummy guise. In this state, Arun maintains his clerical spells whilst also operating as a mummy. His spells and additional powers are stored within a huge 10000gp gem embedded in his forehead. The gem cannot be removed until Arun's death, whereupon it becomes a normal 10000gp gem.

As well as the abilities given above, his heart in room **5** enables him to *regenerate* 3HP per round and also gives him a 30% magic resistance. He is turned by clerics as a 'Special'; other abilities, such as his *fear* and *disease*, are the same as a normal mummy.

7. At this point in the corridor, a great slab of stone bridges a fast flowing river. The bridge is 15' wide and has no hand rails. At both ends of the bridge is a signpost, written in common, which says: 'Wait for the gong to sound before crossing'. If the characters adhere to this advice, they will have two minutes to cross the bridge; if they don't, they may be swept into the water below by a great gust of wind (see room **3** for more details).

8. This is an empty, bare, sandy cavern. It is here that the dungeon residents obtain their water supply. Characters entering this dungeon via the stream to the north-east will be washed up on the northern side of the cavern.

The Temple of Loki

Any good characters entering within the dotted line on the map will feel the presence of evil. Those good characters fighting within the dotted area surrounding rooms **9, 10** and **11**, must fight and make all saving throws at −2.

9. The Main Temple. This is the temple of Loki, frequented by his worshippers within the village, who use the entrance at the manor and mill during the dark hours to avoid suspicion. Wooden pews line the sides of the room to the east and west, and a glowing firepit beneath a statue of the god Loki has been constructed in the southern portion of the room. Here, stairs lead up to a semi-circular raised parapet where more steps lead up to the giant statue of the god. The statue depicts Loki seated on a golden throne, leaning forward with his arms outstretched and his hands cupped as if to receive some gift.

The walls, floors and ceiling of the room are decorated with intricate mosaics of fires, flames and explosions set against a dark background. The enclosures in the northern section of the room are linked with clothes pegs on which hang cloaks and robes embroidered with a firey flame.

There is a 2% chance that a ceremony will be in progress. In this case, all worshippers of Loki will be present, including all the relevant villagers and Vormoth (**17**).

If no ceremony is in progress, however, there will always be 1-2 of the following in the room (roll d8):

1 Barjil and his guards
2-3 Sharla
4 Felia
5-7 Ferrano
8 Wynch (will be accompanied by Balsby 50% of the time).

Any intruders will be dealt with as the DM sees fit. Help from room **10** will almost certainly be summoned.

The fire pit in the south is always kept burning. The pit is 20' deep and the fire should be treated as a very hot normal fire – damage of 6HP per segment (halved if save made). If a body, dead or alive, is cast into the pit on a non-holy day (when there is no service), a red, shadowy figure of a man will slowly rise from the pit and waft over to the statue of Loki. Poised above the statue's cupped hands, this figure will suddenly get sucked into them – as a djinni would into its bottle. The statue will then slowly animate and attack any good beings within the temple area.

Animated Statue: AC10; HD16; HP100; Att 2-12/2-12; N; XP 5100.

The statue requires magical weapons to hit, is completely immune to sleep, charm, hold, fire and electrical based spells. Poison and paralysis do not affect it either but cold-based spells do double damage. The statue attacks with its two great fists. It will not follow characters outside the temple complex and will reform to its normal state in 1 turn if all good characters leave for that duration.

10. These are the quarters of the temple guards; charmed farmers who have been converted to Loki's religion. There will always be 2-5 present in the room and their leader. There is also a 30% chance that Wynch will be skulking around in here if he has not been found elsewhere in the complex.

Temple guards: AC5; LVL1; HP9,8,8,7,5; Fighter; Human; CE. Longsword; shortbow; dagger; scale armour; shield. XP 46, 44, 44, 42, 38.

Guard commander: AC2; LVL5; HP25; Fighter; Human; CE. Longsword; dagger; plate mail; shield; 25gp. XP 300.

Both the commander and the temple guards wear black robes embroidered with a red flame over their armour.

The men keep a continuous watch through a peep-hole in the southern wall of the temple. They will enter through the secret door here if help is required.

11. The door to this room is a heavy stone portal, locked and bolted many times. Only a *knock* spell or those with exceptional or giant strength will have any chance of opening the door. Forced entrance will catch the attention of the guards in **10**.

The room beyond holds the valuables found in the dungeon so far, mostly belonging to the old villagers who died in the earthquake. Scattered about the room are metal and clay urns, sacks, chest and pots containing: 3750cp, 920sp, 450ep, 377gp, 103pp, 5×10gp gems, 2×50gp gems, 1×100gp gem, 3 small pieces of jewellery (100gp, 150gp and 210gp), a golden chalice (170gp), and 3 tapestries (20gp each). All prized items have been taken, or sacrificed to Loki – as is the destiny of these valuables.

12. On entering this room the characters will suddenly become aware that the temperature has risen greatly. This room is, in fact, the prison of 4 steam mephits, who are being held in captivity until they perform some vile task for Vormoth (see room **17** for details on Vormoth). 10' wide ledges run around the walls of the room but vision is obscured by the dense steam. This steam is produced by a large pool of boiling water 10' below the ledges. The water is kept at a constant temperature by a huge fire below the room on a lower level (room **22**), and the water level is kept constant by a small waterfall to the east of the room, which diverts some of the water from the subterranean stream. Characters falling into the water will start boiling alive and will die within 1 round if they are not rescued immediately. Rescued characters will take 3d6 damage for each segment they are in the water. Characters 'boiled' for more than 5

segments will be severely burnt, blistered, and very red, and will require immediate treatment, and will not, under any circumstances, be able to fight. Any mephit scoring a natural 20 to hit will send the character hit plunging into the water unless they roll less than their dexterity on 1d20.

4 steam mephits: AC7; HD3+3; HP20,20, 16,16; Att 1-4/1-4; CE; XP 255 (×2), 239 (×2); [*FF*].

The steam produced is employed for a variety of uses. It is pumped around the dungeon complex and the village above. Some of it is piped to room **16**, for use in the trap there.

13. A huge stone slab is set against the western wall. The slab is set on runners and may be pushed either southwards or northwards from either the eastern or western sides. Pushing it northwards will gain entrance; pushing it southwards will cause a rockfall on the side of the door it was pushed from, causing 3-30HP of damage to anyone within 10' of the door, and blocking the entrance; this will take 8 characters about 1½ hours to clear.

14. The whole of this room is protected by a *protection from evil* spell. The room is empty but for a life-size figure of the deities Loki and Freya entwined in combat. The statue of Freya kneels on the floor with Loki's right hand firmly gripping her throat and pushing her head back. In his other hand Loki clenches a long dagger which is only prevented from slashing Freya's neck by her right hand grasping his wrist tightly. Freya's other hand is bent behind her, open palmed.

At the foot of the statue is a red tablet. The tablet will appear to be in the alignment tongue of the character attempting to read it, unless the character is evil in alignment, in which case the tablet will appear blank. The tablet reads:

Mere mortals take your fill,
And gaze at us so entwined
In a ceaseless battle to overthrow
One another in this wretched place.
And when the time arrives, as it will,
One of us will make the sign,
Which will clearly show
Who must, at last, gain the necklace.

15. Any character passing through this corridor or drawing back one of the drapes will be attacked by 5 illusionary fighters, one from each cubicle.

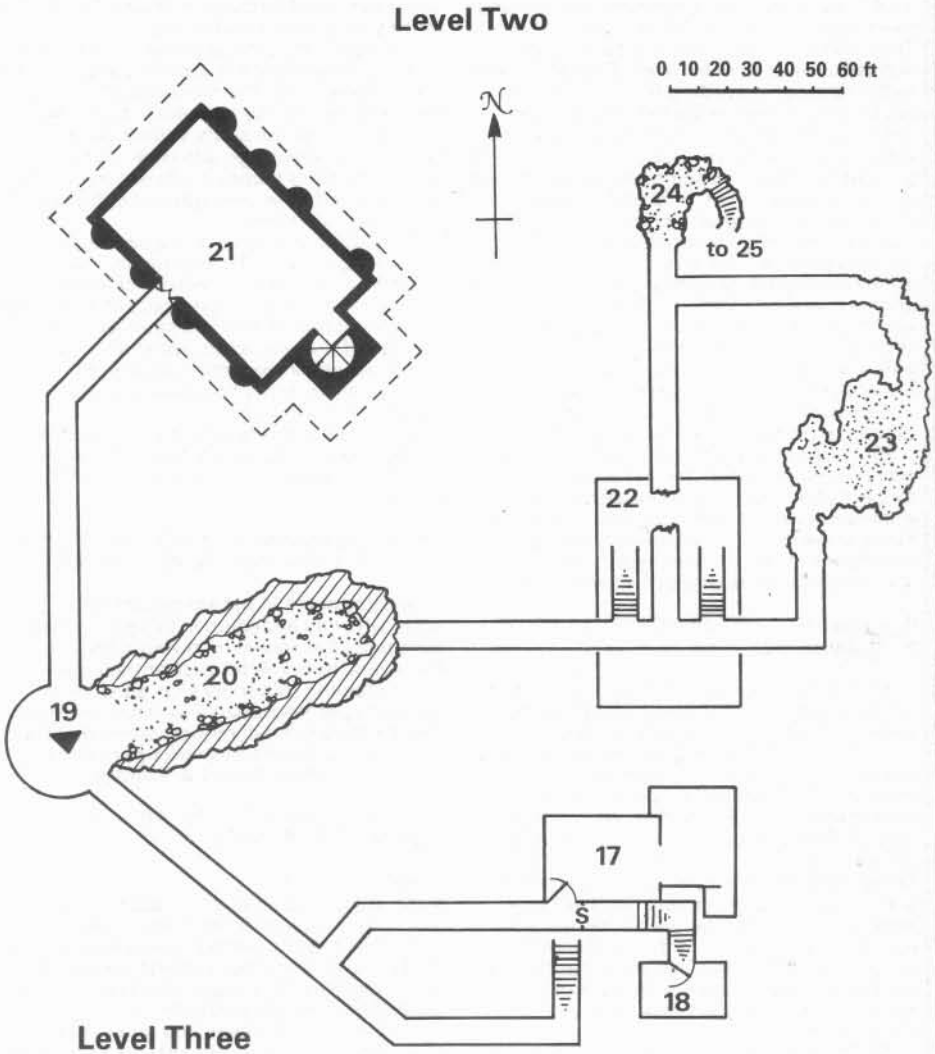
5 illusions: AC2; LVL7; HP40 each; Fighter; Att 2-8; N; XP 1150 each.

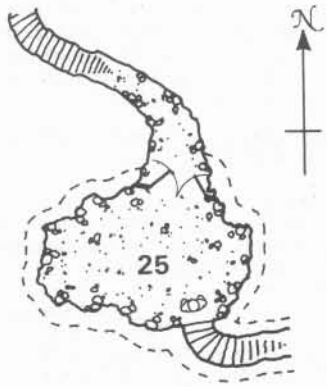
Their weapons and armour are also illusionary but appear real to the characters. They wear plate mail and shield and wield morning stars. The only way of determining whether the men are real or not is by using a *Gem of Seeing* or a spell of *true sight*, whereupon a character with such an item/spell will not see the illusions and, subsequently, cannot be harmed by them. Other characters will believe them to be real; there is no saving throw. Upon their 'death', the illusions and all their possessions will disappear.

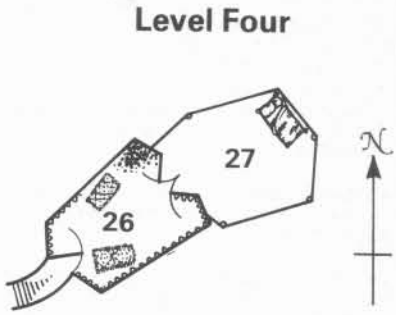
Being illusions, they are totally unaffected by mind-based spells. Other spells, however, will do damage to make the battle look realistic.

The secret door in the easternmost cubicle may only be opened from the north side.

16. This 70' by 70' room is tiled in 10' square stone slabs. There is only one safe path through the room to the other exits, which is by treading on the squares shaded on the map. The other squares are connected to a steam outlet from **12**. Each time a character steps onto one of these, a great geyser of boiling water will shoot upwards through concealed holes in the stone slab. Each character on that slab will take 2-5 points of damage. The slabs are so large that a character will not be able to run across them without taking damage. Only a spell or *Gem of Seeing* will reveal which slabs are safe to tread on.







Level 2

17. Here resides Vormoth, a vampire/magic-user. Vormoth is extremely pompous and polite, resembling anything but a vampire. He keeps his chambers in excellent condition and they are lavishly furnished. Vormoth is, in fact, the most feared occupant of the dungeon, which he regards as his own (the design and construction was totally under his supervision). He is also a devoted follower of Loki.

Vormoth has been heard to invite passing adventurers (which he gets very few of) in for a glass of fine wine. He keeps a good selection of wines, labelled either young, mature, or vintage. All his 'wines' are red and (yes, you guessed it . . .), are in fact bottles of human blood. Unfortunately, he hasn't yet been able to get anyone to take a sip.

Vormoth: AC1; HD8+3; LVL8; HP75; Vampire/MU; Att 5-10; energy drain; CE. XP 6900. +2 *Dagger*; *Brooch of Shielding* (40 charges); *Ring of Fire Resistance*) 50gp; 1250pp (in a locked coffer), 2 emeralds (1000gp each); a sceptre of gold, studded with 5 star rubies, in the shape of a bat's head (10000gp).

18. Deep down within the earth, where no one will find it, is Vormoth's coffin. Vormoth must return to his coffin for one day in every week to recuperate. The coffin is *wizard locked* at 8th level. In a secret compartment under the coffin is Vormoth's spell book (the DM should determine the spells).

19. Here stands a shining, jet black obelisk, 10' high and studded with 6-inch spikes. Any character carrying metal who approaches within 10' of the obelisk will be drawn towards it unless they roll under their

strength on 1d20. When a character is within 5' of it, any metal on their person will be flung towards the obelisk and stick there (no save). The obelisk is actually a magically magnetised lump of obsidian rock. Characters will suffer damage according to the velocity at which they strike the obelisk; this is determined by the amount of armour they are wearing. Characters in plate, splint or banded armour will take 3-18 points of damage, those in ring, scale or chain, 2-12 points, and those characters carrying some quantity of metal that they may not immediately let go of (such as iron spikes in a backpack) will take 1-3 points on impact. Only those with no armour and no metal on them, or objects of metal which can be removed or discarded within 1 segment, will not be drawn towards the pyramid. Magical items of +3 or greater are not affected by the magnetism. The magnetism field may be *dispelled* – treat the level of the magic-user who created it as 8th.

20. The earth along the sides of this passageway is very loose and dry. When the characters are about halfway down the passage, 8 ghouls will come crashing out from the loose earth, showering it everywhere. One of the ghouls will reveal the entrance to the corridor at the end of the passage as the earth collapses.

8 ghouls: AC6; HD2; HP14 each; Att 1-3/1-3/1-6; paralysis; CE; XP 93 each; [*MM*].

21. The Old Temple of Freya. The old temple is very dusty, dirty and covered in cobwebs. The whole area clearly shows signs of neglect – no-one has entered the temple since the coming of the earthquake which buried it ages before. Despite the hammering the church took when the land caved in around it though, most of it remains much as it was a century ago. The church also offers a place of refuge for good characters as it is perpetually surrounded by a *protection from evil* spell. However, the great double doors that lead into the church are *wizard locked* shut by a magic-user of 8th level, as is the trapdoor at the top of the staircase which leads to the bell tower. A rope dangles freely here, attached to a bell in the tower above.

22. Stone bridges cross a chasm of fire at this point. The ledges are 10' wide, 4 inches thick, and join at a T-shaped intersection. Part of the bridge running north has been destroyed, revealing a 15' wide gap to the other side. Fire spurts up and whips around the ledges, and the heat which is given off is almost unbearable. The chasm appears virtually bottomless, but is in fact 100' deep. At this depth lurk 4 salamanders, bathing in the heart of the fire.

4 salamanders: AC5/3; HD7+7; HP50,47,40,38; Att 1-6+1-6/2-12+1-6; XP 1325, 1295, 1225, 1205; [*MM*].

The salamanders will ascend the steps from their lair to attack the characters. If any character or salamander throws a true 20 while in combat, their opponent will lose his footing (unless he rolls DEX or less on 1d20) and fall to his death 100' below. Only those with *fire resistance* can possibly survive the heat down there.

Characters will notice that if they stay on the stone ledges they will only take 1HP of damage each round. However, if they descend the steps, they will take 1d6 damage for each 10' they descend, cumulative. Similarly, those crossing the 15' gap by rope will take 1d6 damage for each round that it takes to cross.

The fire heats the water in room **12**, being situated directly beneath that room.

23. Water drips through the roof of this cavern. Strange moulds and fungi grow in clusters over the walls and ceiling and long weeds and vines dangle from the heights of the roof above. The water drips along these vines, falling to the ground as a sickly yellow liquid. The floor is smooth and wet being covered by a ½" layer of moisture. Flat yellow moulds and fungi grow here, spreading out horizontally rather than vertically. The whole room smells damp and putrid.

The water drips through the cracks in the rocks, coming from the stream above. As the water passes over the mosses and fungi it becomes very sticky and gluey. Upon reaching the ground, the sickly yellow water becomes a very tough adhesive. For each step a character takes on this substance, he must roll under his strength on 1d20 to avoid becoming stuck fast.

In its lair to the north of the cavern is a shambling mound. This particular creature excretes a neutralising substance which allows it to move across the glue at its normal movement rate. When it is satisfied that enough of the characters are stuck, it will attack. All stuck characters must fight at −2 and lose all dexterity bonuses to armour class due to their immobility.

In its lair the shambling mound has 330cp, 750sp, 250ep, 90gp, 40pp; a *Scroll* of *teleport, haste* and *spider climb*; and a *Ring of Free Action*.

Shambling mound: AC0; HD9; HP50; Att 2-16/2-16; suffocation; N; XP 2300; [*MM*].

24. Concealed in the stonework here is a xorn, who has ended up in this part of the dungeon after travelling through the ground for several hours. After such an excursion, the xorn is feeling rather peckish, so when it hears the party approaching, it will not attack immediately but will request some metals from the characters to snack upon. If the characters refuse, then it will attack.

Xorn: AC-2; HD7+7; HP52; Att 1-3/1-3/1-3/6-24; N; XP 1795; [*MM*].

Level 3

Note: All rooms on levels 3 and 4 are protected by a *protection from evil* spell.

25. This rough cavern is completely empty but for an immense being standing at the top of the stairway. This creature is a clay golem, created by the high priest of the village when he first hid the necklace. The golem has orders to allow no-one to enter the stairway other than its master (who is long dead). The golem will not attack unless the party attacks it first, but will instead just block the entrance. Any character trying to sneak past will be thrown back into the room. The left eye of the golem is a *Gem of Seeing*.

Clay golem: AC7; HD11; HP50; Att 3-30; N; XP 3600; [*MM*].

Level 4

26. Great golden doors stand closed to the east of this room. Huge tapestries cover the rock walls and expensive rugs lay spread on the cold floor. Four torches burn in golden torch brackets (100gp each), giving off a small amount of heat. Bags of coins have spilled over in the north-eastern corner, spreading their contents around the room. A comfortable pile of cushions have been meticulously placed in the south-eastern corner. Here, guarding the last gates, is Jowana, a guardian naga.

Jowana: AC3; HD11; HP60; Att 1-6/2-8; LG; XP 4510; [*MM*]. Spells: 1st level – *detect evil, sanctuary*. 2nd level – *hold person, snake charm*. 3rd level – *dispel magic*. 4th level – *detect lie*.

Jowana is extremely wise and good. She will allow no character to enter through the golden gates and will, under no circumstances, be persuaded to the contrary. Good characters will be asked to leave, evil ones destroyed. She will fight good characters only if they attack her or persist in trying to enter through the golden doors.

The valuables in the north-eastern corner belong to her and are her reward for her lifelong loyalty. The bags contain 4500sp, 8000gp, 2000pp, five 100gp gems, six 500gp gems, and two 1000gp gems, a diamond and gold tiara (3000gp), a gold and ivory horn (500gp), a set or ruby earrings (800gp), a *Potion* of *ESP*, and a +3 *Longsword*.

27. This chamber is brightly lit by 5 *continual lights* on the ceiling. It is carpeted and a bed has been erected against the far wall. Suspended by no noticeable means in the middle of the room, is a fantastically beautiful necklace set with a single huge blue gem. As the characters enter, the doors will swing shut behind them and transform into a 2' diameter black sphere. This is a static *Sphere of Annihilation* which cannot be moved by any magic or psionic powers. Simultaneously, the necklace will fly up to the highest part of the ceiling, 25' above, and stay there. Rising from the bed against the far wall comes a figure of a man. The figure is transparent and ghost-like, yet emits no evil. It is in fact the soul of the long dead high priest who hid the gems, destined to guard it until even his spirit has been destroyed. The high priest still retains those spells which he did not use at the battle 100 years ago. He fights as a 16th level cleric with a material +3 *Mace*.

High priest's spirit: AC0; LVL16; HP80; Cleric; Inhuman; NG; XP 9350. Spells: 1st level – *command* (×2), *light, remove fear, resist fire, silence 15' radius* (×2), *spiritual hammer*. 3rd level – *continual light, cure blindness, dispel magic, prayer*. 4th level – *protection from evil 10' radius, sticks to snakes*. 5th level – *dispel evil, flame strike, insect plague*. 6th level – *blade barrier*.

The spirit of the high priest can only be hit by silver or magic weapons. When he is slain, he will drop his mace and his soul will disappear. The necklace of Brisingamen will then fall to the floor. Simultaneously, the *Sphere of Annihilation* will then start to flash yellow. The sphere will act as a *teleport* to room **14**, for 1 turn after the cleric has been killed. After that it will return to its original state.

Any non-good character attempting to pick up the necklace must save vs death magic or die. A save will result in 25 points of damage.

EPILOGUE

When the characters *teleport* to room **14**, they will notice that the tablet and the outstretched palm of the statue of Freya are glowing yellow. As soon as the necklace is placed onto Freya's palm, the two statues will begin to animate, and the following should be read to the players:

As the statues begin to animate, a great surge of power flows through Freya, infusing the goddess with supernatural strength. Loki's face twists in wonder as Freya calmly smiles while her strength continues to increase. Then, in one rapid movement, Freya moves the clenched gem around in an arc, striking Loki fully in the face. There is a tremendous explosion as the god of fire and strife is catapulted against the far wall. As Loki tries to regain his balance, he is hit by another explosion, and another, as the rightful owner of the necklace puts her prize into proper use. Then, the goddess lifts the gem far above her head, and chants in some arcane tongue – she and Loki suddenly disappear. Before the party stand two crumbling statues; the gem is gone.'

Although the party will not know it, this was actually a programmed illusion, and not all it appeared to be.

Within a week of successfully retrieving the necklace, each living member of the party will be approached in their sleep by a beautiful woman, which could only be the goddess Freya, who has a magnificent blue gem hanging safely around her neck. The goddess will grant each of the party one *wish*, then she will depart, taking the form of a hawk as she journeys back to her rightful plane. □

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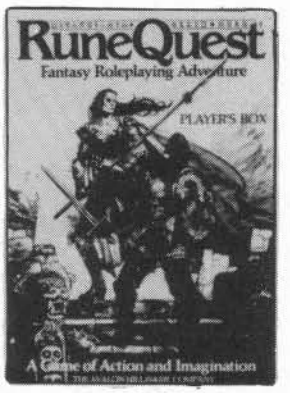

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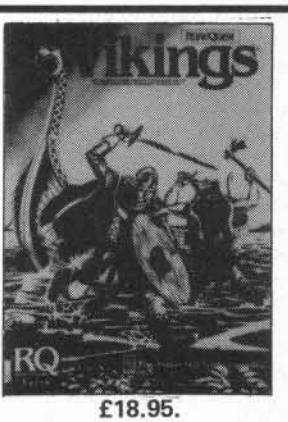

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Origin of the PCs

Playing the Generation Game, by Pete Tamlyn

Over the years I seem to have seen a very large number of role-playing game systems. When I was at university lots of people in my gaming circle wrote their own games; nowadays I am fortunate enough to be able to buy quite a few different games and, in addition, I get several as review copies. Obviously there is no way that I could get to play lengthy campaigns in all of these games, so my practical experience across a wide range of games is not as great as it could be. However, there is one part of a game's rules that nearly always gets tested, if only because it doesn't take much time and is normally the first thing you do when starting a new game. I am talking, of course, about character generation, and I'm sure that there are many people out there with as many rolled but unused characters as I have. Now, given that character generation systems get so much testing you would have thought that game designers would have got things more or less right by now, and yet one of the most recent games to be published, *TSR's Marvel Super Heroes*, has no less than three different methods for acquiring a character. Is this really necessary? Why are there so many very different methods of generating characters and is there a 'best' method? What do we want from a character generation system anyway?

Let us start by looking at a few complaints about existing systems. Last year a fanzine editor (who will probably wish to remain nameless) in commenting on the *James Bond 007* game, which has a character *design* system, said that he much preferred the dice-rolling method of *AD&D* because it gave you a chance of getting acharacter who was much better than average. Many people, I suspect, would have put things the other way round. In the early days of 'the hobby' when fan magazines still debated *D&D's* design, there were a lot of articles about character rolling bemoaning the fact that players used to 'suicide' characters with poor prime requisites in the hope of getting a better one. If people were not prepared to play poor characters, it was said, why bother having a system that allowed them to be rolled? Besides, was it fair that one player should be able to start out with a much better character than any of his fellows?

Personally I had always agreed with those sentiments and leant towards *design* rather than *dice-rolling* systems. The only reasons that I didn't rewrite the character generation system of my own game were firstly that changing systems in the middle of a long running campaign is usually unpopular with players, and secondly that it would have taken considerable time and effort on my part to work out how to balance requisite scores, race, social background, etc, so that players could trade one off against the other. This was all before I bought the *James Bond 007* game. Watching players roll characters for this was something of an eye-opener. They would flip through the character generation rules, scratch their heads, read the rules again much more slowly, scribble down a few ideas, re-read the rules. throw away the first sheet of paper, and so on. One person got fed up and left a large number of character generation points unallocated, and I could just imagine someone reaching for the dice to help them make up their minds. The problem was somewhat worsened by the players not being familiar with espionage games (though they had seen enough Bond movies to know what they were doing), but when the rulebook says that you will need some practice with the system before you can create a satisfactory character, well, wouldn't we be better off with dice?

Then again, perhaps there is another way. Look, for example, at *Indiana Jones* and *Marvel Super Heroes*. In both games, the prime objective is for the players to use pre-generated characters which are supplied with the game, though *MSH* does provide random and design methods in addition. Alternatively, *Golden Heroes* provides a mixed system whereby the player rolls his superpowers and then designs the rest of the character around them. However, none of these systems are guaranteed to give the players the characters that they want. A particular problem with *MSH* is that, in trying to recreate a given team of *Marvel* heroes with your group of players, you are fairly certain to end up having to give at least one person a character they loathe. *Indiana Jones* is worse because there *is* only the one star character. In *Golden Heroes* the character design has been made highly competitive because the system encourages players to make the best use of the powers they have rolled rather than allowing them a bit of leeway with the rolls in order to produce a more satisfactory character. (Admittedly the GM is supposed to counterbalance this by making life easier for players who are willing to sacrifice some of their powers to come up with a decent character, but in my view a good game design should not try to rely on GM or player behaviour to produce the correct results). Indeed, the *Golden Heroes* system seems to channel players into all sorts of characters other than the ones that they want to, based on the argument that although it is OK for players to choose their own powers if they want to and the GM agrees), if a player always chooses the same type of character then he should be made to roll for one instead. Another salient point about the *GH* system is that whilst my players spent a long time poring over the rules for the *Bond* game, when it came to producing a rationale for their *GH* characters they all asked to go away and think about it and let me know next week. It is a good job that I was not planning to start a game there and then.

Well, so far all we have got are a lot of objections to the various systems currently available, plus a few opinions about differing approaches. It is now time to be a little more constructive: let us assume that we are writing a set of RPG rules and see what we would do about creating a character generation system.

The first thing that has to be said is that the character generation system is only a cosmetic. Whilst it is normally the first part of the game to be used it should, in theory, be the last part to be written. Until you know your combat system, spell system, social interaction system, etc, are going to work there is no point in generating any characteristics to use in those systems. Firstly and fundamentally, a character generation system must be a means of generating useful and usable models of characters for use in the other game systems. Certainly it can be dressed up for presentation to the players, but if you lose sight of the fact that its major purpose is to produce the data that drives the other games systems, then you will probably end up with a game that is much more difficult to run than it need be.

Having decided what sort of numbers you want to generate, the next stage, in my opinion, is to give the players what they want – within reason. I realise that there are still people who regard role-playing as a purely competitive activity and who feel that it is part of the skill of the game to be able to handle any character that you are given, but if you are looking to create a pleasing story as well as set challenges for the players then surely it is better to have them running characters with whom they feel comfortable. After all, would a film director randomly distribute parts to the actors on the grounds that a good actor should be able to play any part? In any case, most role-players are fairly poor actors and will perform much better if typecast.

The only problems with letting players have what they want are those of providing a balanced party and of maintaining fairness. As far as balance goes it can be said that if all the players choose to be starship pilots, and as a result there is no one in the party who can program a robot or fix a broken leg or warp drive, then they have only themselves to blame.

Most groups of players, left to their own devices, will end up with far more balanced parties than they would have obtained from a random generation system. It would, however, be possible to design a system whereby the party as a whole had to spend a certain number of character generation points in each area and leave the players to decide who is going to have which skills.

Fairness can be achieved simply by placing reasonable limits on what players can design. 'Yes, you can have all of those superpowers, provided that you accept that there is this stuff called Kryptonite which is a deadly poison to you and only you . . .' (and here I think that *Champions* has done it better than *Golden Heroes* because in the former game you can buy extra character generation points by choosing weaknesses, whereas in *GH* it is up to the GM to balance things.) It may be advisable to introduce a small amount of randomness for the benefit of those players who like to gamble, provided that it is obvious that suiciding your character is not going to give you a chance of something greatly superior next time. If you are stuck with one of those players who is not happy unless his character is markedly better than anyone else's then his moaning about not having a chance to roll a super character is going to be one of the least of your problems.

So far so good, but when we come to think about how a character generation system is used in a game we find some requirements which conflict with what we have got already. What do we do, for example, about NPCs? It is all very well having a wonderfully flexible and detailed system that allows a player to design a character that is just what he wants and has a complete history and personal profile, and even the GM may wish to use such a system to produce some of the more important non-player characters, but is he really going to want to sit down for an hour or so with ten pages of tables each time he wants an innkeeper, customs official or petty crook? No way! What he wants is a neat, simple table which in return for a few quick die rolls, will produce characters who have all the right statistics, are fairly average for the world they live in, but have enough detail about them to avoid them appearing stereotyped. Whereas giving the player what he wants probably means letting him design his own character, giving the GM what he wants for NPC generation is best achieved by having a simple dice-rolling method.

In fact, when we think about it, giving the player what he wants does not always mean the same thing. Going back to the example of the *James Bond 007* game, whilst the very complicated character design system is thoroughly confusing for beginners, once a player is familiar with the game he may relish the detail provided. The more you know about a game, the better use you are able to make of a complicated character design system. At the other end of the scale, if you are sitting down at the beginning of an evening's session with a commercially produced scenario to play and you want to get to bed at a reasonable time then you won't need a system that tells you your character's complete history in his last five reincarnations and details his relatives as far as the third cousin twice removed – you may only use the character for a few hours. In this sort of situation, taking a pre-generated character may well seem preferable to wasting even ten minutes of valuable playing time rolling one up. Additionally we should consider what types of character we want to be rolling. One of the commonest failings of character generation systems is that they are often geared solely to the production of 'first level adventurers'. *D&D* is a classic example of this; the six lots of 3d6 can only produce a character who is an adventurer at the start of his career, and Gary Gygax has made it clear that such characters are above average for the society in which they live. If the GM wants a character who is a seasoned mercenary, a simple peasant, a 300-year-old sorcerer or a 6-year-old child then the system breaks down immediately. Nor is it only for rolling NPCs that the ability to generate characters of all ages and abilities is required. In a long-running campaign when a character dies it is daft to start the player off with a novice character when his knowledge of the campaign world is very detailed and all of the party will be powerful veterans. Equally, and harking back to the idea of giving players what they want, if you have got the sort of group who are only ever happy when they can lay waste to a galaxy and slaughter a legion of demi-gods before breakfast, why not save yourself some time and heartache by allowing them to roll up powerful characters to begin with?

In the final analysis, of course, the players' personal preferences should also be taken into account. Inevitably there will be some players who are fairly devoid of imagination but who nevertheless take to role-playing because they enjoy the atmosphere created for them by the GM and the other players. Such people faced with a complex character design system are likely to be totally lost. They like to have the roll of the dice to give them a few ideas around which to base a character. One of my favourite anecdotes about character generation concerns the system I devised for my Celtic Ireland game, Inis Fail. Under that system, character generation was a somewhat tedious and boring process that involved rolling dice fifty or so times before you got any results that meant anything. Realising that the system was somewhat complicated, I tried to make things easy by writing a simple computer program to roll the dice for you. Players thus had the choice of rolling all the dice for themselves or of making a single percentile dice roll to choose a fully generated character off the computer-produced list. Despite the fact that the chances of getting a good character were more or less equal between the two methods, almost every player who took a character in the game elected to roll all the dice for himself.

What we have discovered then, is that character generation is a complex and wide-ranging activity and that different methods will appear best depending on who is using the system, how much time and effort they want and/or need to put into getting results, and what sort of character is to be created. It seems, therefore, that a comprehensive set of RPG rules should contain at least two character generation systems; one for fast generation of NPCs and characters for beginning players and one-off scenarios, and a second which allows experienced players to create the sort of character they would like for a long-running campaign. Indeed, if one or other of these systems is missing then the GM will probably find it necessary to write it himself.

Professional game designers please take note, especially with respect to being able to generate all kinds of characters rather than just novice adventurers. □

SLEIGH WARS

Merry Xmas Mayhem in a 2-4 Player Boardgame from Chris Elliott and Richard Edwards

INTRODUCTION
'Mummy, if there really is a Santa Claus, and he always brings people the presents they want most, how come I get landed with schlock like this every Christmas?'

Ever wondered why? Well, the answer is that it became obvious long ago that there was no way that Santa could cope with the increasing volume of deliveries, and so the powers that be advertised for additional franchise holders, with the result that there are now four Santas rather than one. The trouble is, they all have very different ideas of what the job involves, and of the right presents for people . . .

Santa Claus: Jolly, fun-loving benefactor of mankind. Likes Vera Lynn, Max Bygraves, Des O'Connor, Doris Day movies and giving people heart-warming presents.

Starting Presents: Doll and Trainset; Teddy and Blue Peter Annual; Slippers and Perfume; Return Tickets to

Miami; Harrods' Hamper; Club 80-90 Christmas Break Ticket.

Anti-Claus: Mean, vicious, rotten and depraved. Gives people Vera Lynn, Max Bygraves and Des O'Connor records. Like we said, mean, vicious, rotten and depraved.

Starting Presents: Swedish Action Man and Barbie Doll; Roller Skates, Both Mothers-In-Law; American Express Rejection Slip; Conservative Government; Appearance on 'Game for an Xmas Laugh'.

General Nicholas B Claus III Jr: Decent, clean-living Santa and scourge of Commie pervert so-called Father Christmases. Brings people the presents they need. They may not want them, but . . .

Starting Presents: Nurse and Soldier Uniforms; Bullworker; DIY Fallout Shelter, DIY Cruise Missile; Brush, Whitewash and Protect and Survive Subscription; Ownership Certificate for 1 Square Foot of the Falkland Isles.

The Ongoing Spirit of Christmas Where It's At At This Moment In Time: Brings people significant, now-type presents in a meaningful way.

Starting Presents: Mr and Mrs PacPerson Game; Adoption Voucher; Entry into London Marathon and Aerobics Course; Domestic Robot; Social Services Season Tickets; YTS Trainee.

The map shows the houses of the six families that each Santa has to deliver a present to:

Janet and John: Who are only five, and meant to be asleep, but are waiting to hear the sound of reindeer on the roof. Meanwhile, the babysitter has dozed off in a drunken stupor, and mummy and daddy are still at their office parties.

Expected Presents: Doll and Trainset; Swedish Action Man and Barbie Doll; Nurse and Soldier Uniforms; Mr and Mrs PacPerson Game.

Tiny Tim: The orphan who lives alone. Ahhh.

Expected Presents: Teddy and Blue Peter Annual; Roller Skates; Bullworker; Adoption Voucher.

B A Humbug: Small businessman. Chairman of the Bring Back Victorian Values Campaign. Has written to the Prime Minister several times, pointing out that the abolition of public holidays would result in a 2.146% increase in the Gross National Product.

Expected Presents: Club 80-90 Xmas Break Ticket; Appearance on 'Game for an Xmas Laugh'; Ownership Certificate for 1 Square Foot of the Falkland Islands; YTS Trainee.

Steve and Glenda Jackson: Mr and Mrs Average, who have decided there isn't anything worth watching on the telly, and are asleep in bed with a cup of cocoa inside them.

Expected Presents: Slipper and Perfume; Both Mothers-In-Law; DIY Fallout Shelter; Entry into London Marathon and Aerobics Course.

Steve and Suzi Jackson: Two young Americans, celebrating Christmas in the traditional Californian way by having a jacuzzi party with friends.

Expected Presents: Return Tickets to Miami; American Express Rejection Slip; DIY Cruise Missile; Domestic Robot.

The Froggatts: Life's losers. Huddled round a blazing Yuletide fire of final demands, Mr and Mrs Froggatt and their fourteen children are wondering what Christmas will bring for them.

Expected Presents: Harrods' Hamper; Conservative Government; Brush, Whitewash and Protect and Survive Subscription; Social Services Season Tickets.

THE GAME
This game can be played by 2, 3, or 4 players (four players are best). Each takes the part of one of the four Santas, and has six presents to deliver, one to each of six houses. For each present delivered to the right house, a player gets two points, and for each one delivered to the wrong house they get one point. Only one present can be delivered to each house by the same player, and each present undelivered at the end of the game scores −1 point. The game ends when any player has delivered all six of their presents, and the winner is the player who has scored the most points. In the case of a tie, the winner is the player who has delivered the most presents correctly. You will need two six-sided dice, and a pencil each, to play.

Components
As well as the map, which shows the houses of six typical families, there are record sheets for each player with a chart to record movement, damage and weapon use, counters for the presents to be delivered, some of the weapons, and each of the sleighs, and two movement markers. The pull-out containing the counters, map and charts should be stuck to a sheet of cardboard and cut out prior to play.

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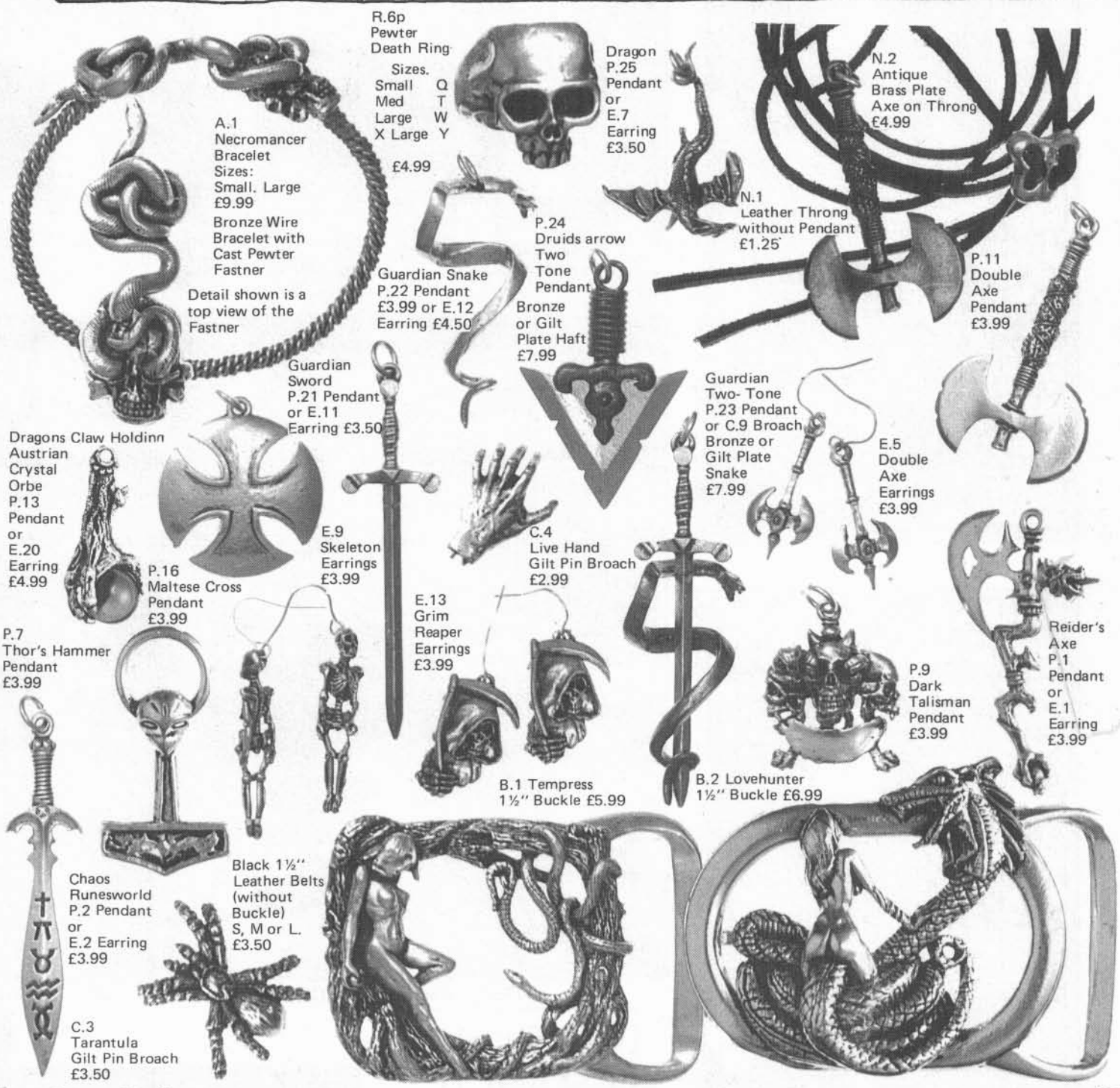

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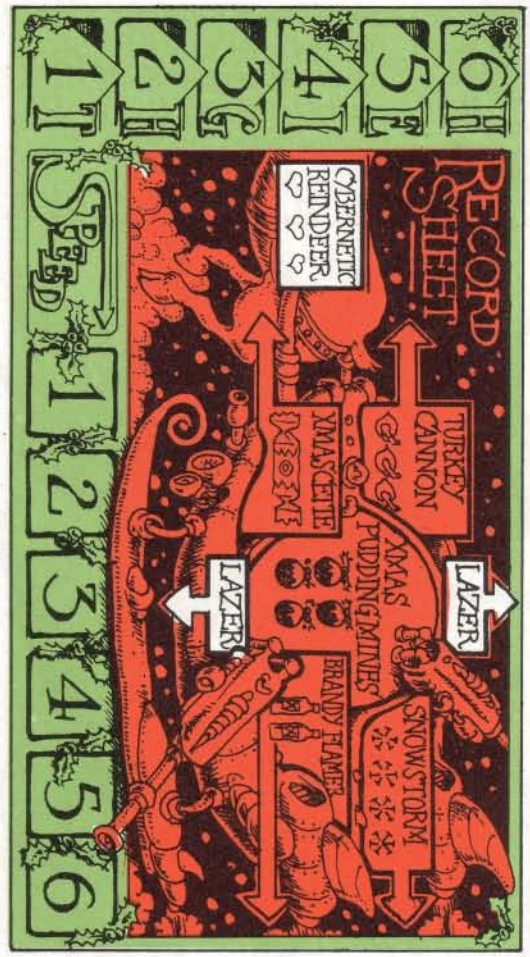

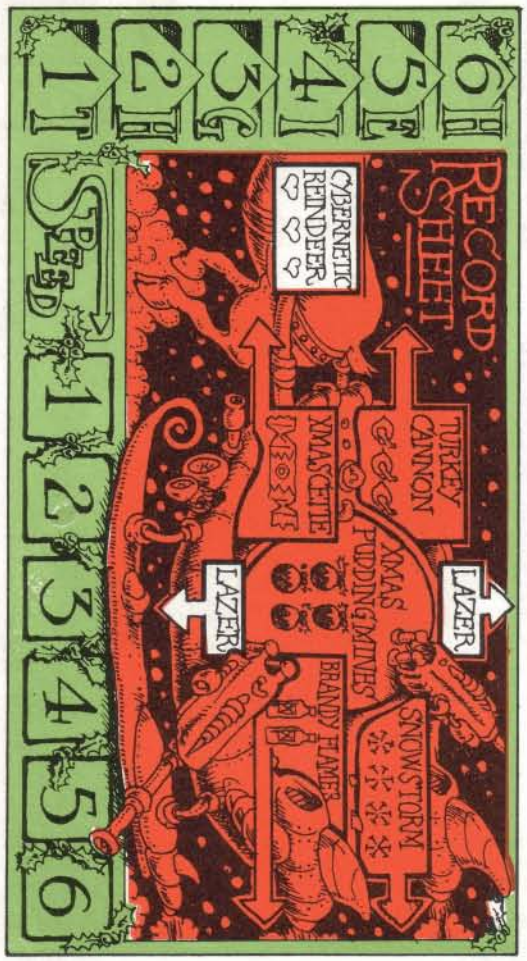

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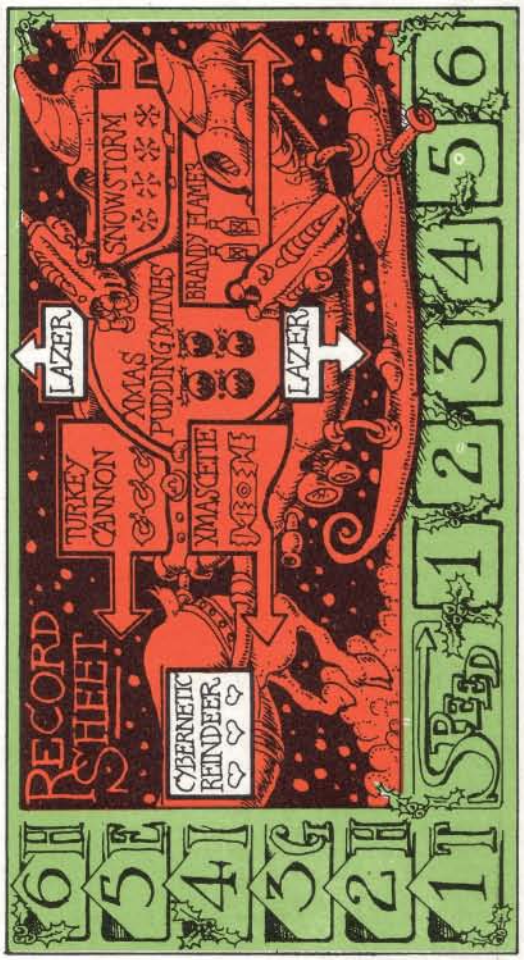

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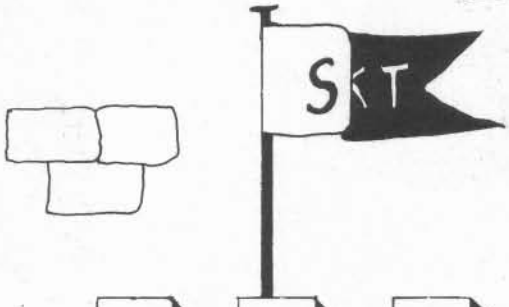

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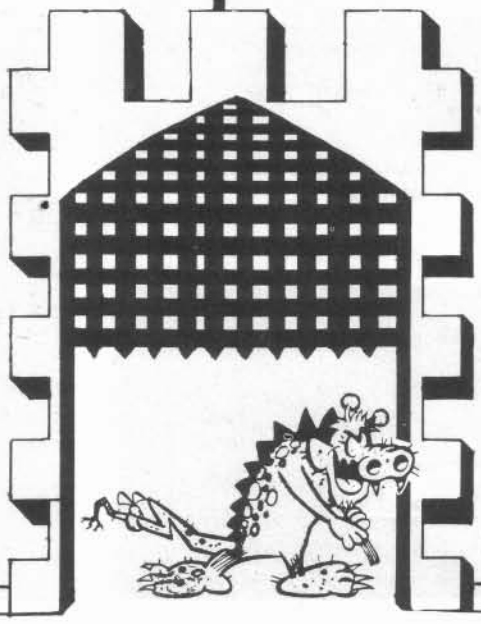

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PRESENTS

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Playing the Game
The game is played in a series of turns. Each turn has a Movement segment and a Combat segment. (Movement and Combat are explained below.) Players move in order, rolling a die to see who moves first, play proceeding clockwise, but combat is treated as simultaneous.

Movement and Manoeuvring
Each player moves once per turn, and movement has three phases – Acceleration, Moving and Braking. A player may *either* accelerate *or* brake in a single turn, but *not* both. The distance that a player can move their sleigh in a single turn depends on the speed that it is doing at the time, ie a sleigh travelling at speed 3 can move 3 hexes on the board. Players *must* move their full movement entitlement each turn. Acceleration affects movement in the current turn. For example, the Anti Claus player is doing a leisurely 2 hexes/turn when it is his turn to move, and opts to accelerate to 5 hexes/turn. When he moves his sleigh counter, it will therefore move 5 hexes rather than 2. The Ongoing Spirit, however, also travelling at 2 hexes/turn at the beginning of his move, decides to come to a halt, and brakes by 2 speed. He will *still* move his token 2 hexes this turn, but next turn will be at a complete standstill unless he opts to accelerate.

Current speed is recorded on the movement chart using one of the markers. A player choosing to accelerate will move their marker along the track and then move the appropriate distance on the board; a player electing to brake will move on the board and then move the marker on the track.

Sleighs can accelerate by up to 3 speed in a turn, and brake by up to 2 speed without penalty. A player wishing to brake by more than 2 speed in one turn must roll a number *greater* than the amount they are braking by, on a six-sided die, to retain control of the sleigh. For example, General Claus slams on the anchors in a desperate attempt to land and deliver a present, trying to brake from 4/hexes turn to a standstill in a single turn. He will have to roll over 4, ie a 5 or 6, on a six-sided die. Any player failing to retain control of their sleigh must roll on the *Crash Table* to find out what has happened to them.

During the movement phase of their turn, players may manoeuvre their sleighs as they wish, within their total movement, unless this involves making a right angle or greater turn in one hex. If a sleigh is turned through more than 90 degrees in a single hex, the player must roll over their current speed on a six-sided die. Failure means another look at the *Crash Table*. Any player trying to brake by more than 2 hexes/speed in a turn *and* turn through more than 90 degrees must roll twice!

To deliver a present to a house, a player must have their sleigh stationary on the roof of the house at the beginning of a turn, and take no other action that turn. The counter representing the present delivered can be left on the house. Delivering a present is treated as taking place instead of the Combat segment of a turn.

Crash Table – Roll 1d6 and add current speed.
Roll Result

3 Lose manoeuvrability – no turns tighter than 60 degrees possible, until a turn is taken for the elves to repair.
4 Lose acceleration – reduced to 2 hexes per turn, until repairs are made (1 turn).
5 Sleigh fishtails – a present falls off (choose randomly); and take a turn to collect it.
6 Intermittent fault in weapons system – roll 1d6 to determine affected weapons (see weapons). Each time the weapon is used roll 1d6; on a roll of 1-3 it fails to work this turn. 1 turn required to repair.
7 Minor fault in weapons system – roll 1d6 to determine affected weapon. 1 turn needed to repair.
8 Major weapons failure – roll 1d6 twice to determine the two weapons that fail, (rolling again if the same weapon is picked twice). 2 turns needed to repair.
9 Cybernetic reindeer ruptured – power loss to all systems. Land immediately and wait two turns for the elves to bring a new one.
10 Lose braking – no braking by more than 20mph without penalty. 2 turns to repair.
11 Sleigh jacknifes – 2 presents fall off; land and take two turns to collect them.
12 Sleigh cartwheels or rolls – 3 presents fall off; land and take 3 turns to collect them.

3-D Movement
To make the game more realistic (*realistic*?), the movement chart can be used to record the height of sleighs. To do this, a player first works out their movement for that turn, and must not wish to either accelerate or brake. He then chooses what combination of forward and upward or downward movement he wishes to make. For example, a move of four hexes could be two up and two along, one up and three along, or any other combination which makes the same total. (It is possible to climb vertically, but this is treated as a 90 degree turn, and a roll must be made on the *Crash Table*.) When a player has decided how his movement will be made, the sleigh counter is moved on the board to represent the foward movement, and the counter on the height track is moved to show the height of the sleigh. Each time the height or speed of the sleigh changes, the counters on the height and speed tracks are moved to record this. The sleigh will always move on the board, unless landed and doing 0 hexes/turn. Obstacles on the board, such as trees and houses, are graduated for height. If a sleigh crosses an obstacle on the board (hex sides partially blocked by obstacles count as being *fully* blocked) and is at the *same* height or lower, a collision has occurred, and a roll must be made on the *Crash Table* to decide the result.

Weapons and Combat
Each sleigh is equipped with six weapons:

Turkey Cannon. Forward-firing line of sight weapon. Fires 14lb foil-wrapped oven-ready turkeys.

Xmascette. A self-targetting guided missile. Only one available, but does not require line of sight to be fired.

Lasers. As seen in Oxford Street and *Star Wars*. Can be aimed at any target unless there is a solid object or snowstorm in the way.

Brandy Flamer. Rear-firing weapon which creates an 'all-altitude' cloud of flaming brandy (non-vintage). The counter representing this remains on the board for a complete turn after it is fired, and affects any sleigh moving through it, counting as one hit.

Snowstormer. Rear-firing weapon which generates a snowstorm, acting as a barrier at all altitudes to lasers and line of sight weapons. The counter representing this remains on the board for two complete turns after it is fired. A snowstorm will cancel out a brandy flamer and vice versa.

Christmas Pudding Mines. These can only be dropped from a sleigh in flight. The counter representing them remains on the board until the mine explodes. It will do this if anything comes within 3 hexes of it in any direction, including up and down. Mines float at the height at which they were dropped. Each mine counts as one 'hit'.

To hit another sleigh, a number equal to or greater than the 'to hit' score for the weapon being used must be rolled on 2d6. Shots can be aimed at any visible target, including reindeer, weapons and runners, but not presents. Each shot that strikes counts as one hit. Reindeer can take three hits before becoming useless; at which point power is lost to all systems, being treated as a roll of 9 on the *Crash Table*. Each hit on a reindeer also reduces acceleration per turn by 1 hex speed. Weapons and runners each take one hit only, but can be repaired by the elves if the sleigh is landed and remains on the ground or a rooftop for one turn without taking any offensive action. For each runner lost, a roll on the *Crash Table* must be made when landing.

Weapons Table Weapon	Score To Hit	Total Shots Available
1 Turkey Cannon	8	3
2 Xmascette	9	1
3 Lasers	6	*
4 Brandy Flamer	Area weapon	2
5 Snowstormer	Area weapon	4
6 Christmas Pudding Mines	Area weapon	4

*Unlimited as long as reindeer is working

Range Modifiers
Long range (20 hexes +): −2 on dice roll
Medium range (10 – 20 hexes): −1 to dice roll
Short range (0 – 10 hexes): no modifier.

Setting Up and Starting
Each sleigh starts the game from one of the four start locations marked on the edge of the board. Only one sleigh can start from each location. If 3-D movement is being used, they are assumed to be travelling at a height of 3 hexes. Starting speed for all sleighs is 3 hexes/turn.

Warning: The designers of this game cannot take any responsibility for the effect that playing it may have on your state of mind. This warning does not constitute a Sanity Clause, because as we all know, there ain't no Sanity Claus! □

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Crawling Chaos *is our regular column for players of* Call of Cthulhu, *edited by Marc Gascoigne.*

RECOMMENDED READING

by J G Cadera

THE GEMHETEP PAPYRUS

History: The papyrus was discovered in a Cairo bazaar in 1895 by Professor Edward Clayton, and was brought to England two years later. The Papyrus dates back to circa 1550BC, which places it roughly in the 18th Dynasty, during the reign of Amonhotep I. For many years it was considered to be nothing more than a fake, and remained unlooked at in Clayton's collection until 1900, when the professor finally decided to try and decipher it.

As Clayton soon realised, the Papyrus of Gemhetep proved to be a virtually complete magical text, but only a fraction of it was translated when Clayton suffered a fatal heart attack in 1902. The Papyrus was forgotten again while Clayton's estate was being put in order, and did not come to light again for another two years, when a colleague, Dr S A Winters, recommenced its deciphering.

Winters was well into his sixties at the time, and it was widely know that he was not a well man, and so nothing was thought of his sudden death less than a month later. The work was handed over to a keen young Egyptologist called Reginald South, who toiled over the translation for six weeks before 'overwork and exhaustion' brought on a nervous breakdown. South never really recovered from this, and promptly shot himself a few days after returning to work in the spring of 1906. In 1910 the Gemhetep Papyrus was sent to the British Museum, along with the rest of the Clayton/Winters Collection, where it apparently still resides, untranslated.

The Author: The name of Gemhetep appears throughout the work which now bears his name. It is certain that he was a priest of Sutekh (or Set) as his name appears alongside it in several passages. It is perhaps useful to note that Set was still regarded as a benificent deity as late as the 19th Dynasty, and it was perhaps due to the activities of priests such as Gemhetep that the deity was eventually regarded as a source of evil.

Spells: At present the Gemhetep Papyrus has a +16% to Cthulhu Mythos knowledge, a ×5 Spell Multiplier, and a −2d10 SAN loss. The following spells have been translated from the original hieroglyphics: *contact Nyarlathotep, contact sand-dweller, summon hunting horror, bind hunting horror, contact Yig.*

Should an investigator wish to translate the text beyond this point, using an appropriate Read Ancient Egyptian skill, he/she has a 40% chance of finding two more spells. These are left to the individual keeper's discretion, but a roll must be made for each spell. There is also a further 4% to Mythos knowledge and −1d10 SAN loss, whether the spells are found or not.

Availability: Due to its reputation for misfortune, the Papyrus is kept away from the access of most scholars. If an Egyptologist wishes to apply to continue the translation, or just to read the manuscript, a successful Archaeology roll must first be made.

THE SPHINGIEN MANUSCRIPT

History: The Sphingien Manuscript was first published under the title of Liber Servitus Nefarius – The Book Of Abominable Bondage. Less than a hundred copies of this obscure work were ever printed, of which it has been ascertained that only twenty-two were ever distributed. These went to a group of occultists known as The Order Of The Flame, who were closely associated with Wilhelm Sphingien, the book's author. The remainder of the books were kept in storage by the publishers, Jager & Voss of Munich, until they were publicly burned in 1886 by Werner Ansbach, a former student and friend of Sphingien.

It is known that before this date a number of strange occurrences took place involving the owners of the book. A couple became insane, several were found horribly mutilated, and one or two simply disappeared. Apart from Sphingien, Ansbach was the last – supposedly sane – member of the Order Of The Flame. Realising this he is said to have set out to destroy the work of his tutor before more people became involved.

Ansbach is known to have found a futher ten of the twenty-two distributed to the order, as well as those remaining with the publishers. The rest remain unaccounted for, save only for a single, badly damaged and incomplete copy in a private collection, and the original manuscript, which was discovered in a London bookshop in 1904, and is now deposited in the British Library.

The Author: Wilhelm Dietrich Sphingien was born in Munich in 1838, but very little else is known about his early life. It is thought that he travelled extensively between 1858 and 1864, during which time he also wrote several short works on travel, folklore and witchcraft. At the age of twenty-seven, after a trip to Asia Minor, he founded the Order Of The Flame and set about writing what he declared at the time to be the most significant occult work of all time. During its writing he is reputed to have haunted graveyards, 'looking for inspiration' he told his friend Ansbach. Sphingien was suspected of grave-robbing on several occasions, as some of the sites he was known to frequent were vandalised during the summer of 1867. There were also reports of people going missing around this time.

Sphingien appears to have gone into exile for a short while, since nothing is recorded of his activities between the winter of 1867 and the spring of 1869. On his return to Munich he appeared careworn and haggard, and now looked considerably older than his thirty-one years.

Some years passed between the completion and the final publication of the Liber Servitus Nefarius, and it was soon after this event that fingers began to be raised in suspicion against Sphingien again. He was suspected of murdering several members of his order, until eventually those few still remaining rebelled against him and the order was dispersed, much to the relief of local people. With the disbanding of the Order Of The Flame, Sphingien sought retirement and left Munich to live in a cottage just outside a small village near Ravensburg.

In 1891, however, his past caught up with him in the form of the vengeful Werner Ansbach. What actually happened still remains a mystery, though some details have emerged. The villagers reported that Sphingien had a visitor on the night of September the 20th. The day after, Werner Ansbach wandered into the village, gibbering like a madman. He told the stunned villagers that he had called down 'the Wrath of the Gods' upon his former master. The cottage was searched, but was quickly put to the torch. According to the official police report, the famous occult scholar Wilhelm Sphingien was murdered by a former associate, who then set fire to the cottage to hide his tracks. Ansbach died three years later in a Berlin asylum.

Spells: The Sphingien Manuscript in the British Museum has a +15% to Cthulhu Mythos knowledge, ×2 Spell Multiplier, and a −1d10 SAN loss. The following are the spells to be found in the complete manuscript (those marked thus * are absent from the damaged book): *call Cyaegha*, contact ghoul, create gate*, enchant sacrificial knife.*

Availability: As has already been stated, the complete handwritten manuscript is to be found in the British Library, in London. The last remaining – and very badly disfigured – copy of Liber Servitus Nefarius is to be found in the private collection of one Dr Charles Sanderman of Margate, Kent. Many of the pages have been violently torn out of this book, and there is a profusion of bloodstains throughout. Viewing the cover will cost an investigator 1 point of SAN: there is the mark of a three-fingered clawed hand imprinted in blood on the front of the book. The inside cover is autographed by Sphingien, and is dedicated to Herr Erich von Ingoldstadt. Both the manuscript and the book are written in Latin, and will require some Fast Talking before they are seen. □

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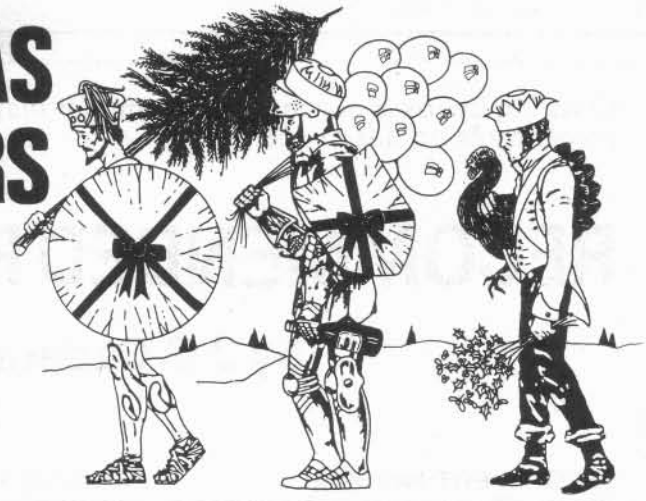

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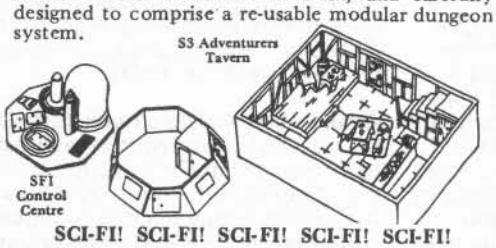

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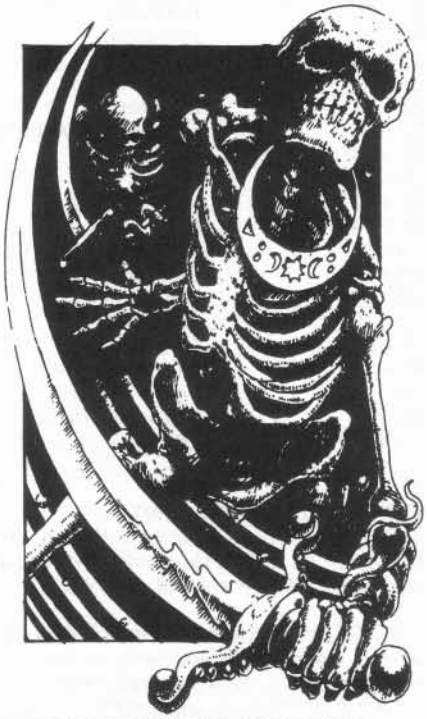
DRAGON WARRIORS

THE ULTIMATE ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

This being *White Dwarf*, we reasoned, our DRAGON WARRIORS advertisement ought to amount to a bit more than a pretty picture and a string of wild claims. *Dwarf* readers are RPG enthusiasts, so presumably you'd rather have some hard facts, some real details about the game. Of course, since this *is* an ad. – and we are the authors of DRAGON WARRIORS – you can't exactly expect objectivity. Will you settle for reasoned argument ...?

DRAGON WARRIORS is THE new fantasy role-playing game. (Fact.) There have been several new games recently, so does the market need another? Absolutely! Taking a look at some of the other FRP games that have come out over the last couple of years, we began to get a feeling of *deja vu*. A lot of the game systems were just old rules rehashed, and the approach always seemed to stress technicalities and dice-rolling at the expense of intrigue and action. The only thing about each new game that really changed was the price – they kept getting more expensive!

We decided that the time had come for a 'next generation' fantasy game. One that was affordable. (Who wants to pay £15.00 for a game they may not like, plus another £5.00 for every new scenario pack?) Hence DRAGON WARRIORS – a very complete set of rules *and* a total of six scenarios for £5.25 in all. If you want to just try out the game, Book One has been written to stand on its own. It includes the essential rules, monsters, campaign map, adventure and tactical hints, plus an introductory adventure, all in one volume, all for £1.75. (If any other game beats DRAGON WARRIORS for value, we haven't seen it!)



It's not enough to be the *cheapest*, of course. We also wanted DRAGON WARRIORS to be the *best*. With ten years' role-playing experience behind us, trying out a lot of different systems, we've come to some conclusions about how to create a good set of rules. They must be easy to use but convey the feeling of a convincing 'fantasy reality': simple but not simplistic. DRAGON WARRIORS had to handle the nuts and bolts (melee, tactics, magic) efficiently, *without* consulting complicated charts.

So let's look at combat. Just two rolls are used. Because looking up tables slows down the game, DRAGON WARRIORS uses a straightforward principle here. To *hit* your opponent, you subtract his DEFENCE from your ATTACK; the number you get is what you must roll equal to or under on d20. If you hit, you check for *armour bypass* – you roll a die (what sort depends on your weapon; d4 if it's a dagger, d8 for a sword etc.) and try to get higher than your opponent's *armour factor*. If you do, he takes a wound (constant for a given weapon type).

That's it – the full DRAGON WARRIORS combat system! Well, not really, because there are special situations and tactical bits and pieces, but that's the bare bones of it all. We made it simple so that new players could quickly get the feel of the game, and experienced players will find plenty of room for development.

Book Two, *TheWay of Wizardry*, expands the DRAGON WARRIORS rules to include the magical arts. As well as nearly a hundred spells, you will find the rules for Alchemy, Calligraphy, Artifice, Enchantment, psychic senses and a host of magic items. Two eerie scenarios – *A Shadow on the Mist* and *Hunter's Moon* – can be used to follow on from the events of Book One as part of an ongoing campaign. The Book involves the occult forces of another world.

Book Three in the series, *The Elven Crystals*, features a trio of linked adventures that lead to a fateful climax: a mission into a forest steeped in sorcery, a raid on a castle (a fiendishly well-defended one, as our own players can attest!), and a visit to a fishing village where things are not as they seem ..(We'd like to say more to any GamesMasters reading, but we don't want to spoil the players' fun!)

We decided to do something pretty drastic with the folklore and milieu, too. Things have got too cute, too twee. The old primordial horrors have been turned into nice, safe, *human* critters straight out of a cartoon show! (Elves have become just hippies in green tunics; Dwarves run the corner tavern in your average fantasy village.) But the Green Knight was an elf. Grendel was "troll-kin". There's nothing cosy about those guys! In the world of DRAGON WARRIORS, elves are feared for a very good reason: *they have no souls* ... monsters in DRAGON WARRIORS are eerie supernatural beings. They are not simply in the world to provide player-characters with sword fodder.

These are just a few designer notes: what we've tried to do, and how we've gone about it. We believe that we live up to our claim, *The Ultimate Role-Playing game.* Don't take our word for it though. Go out and buy DRAGON WARRIORS and see for yourself!!

Dave Morris
Oliver Johnson

Book One: Dragon Warriors,
Book Two: The Way of Wizardry
and Book Three: The Elven Crystals
are all published by
Corgi Books, at £1.75 each.

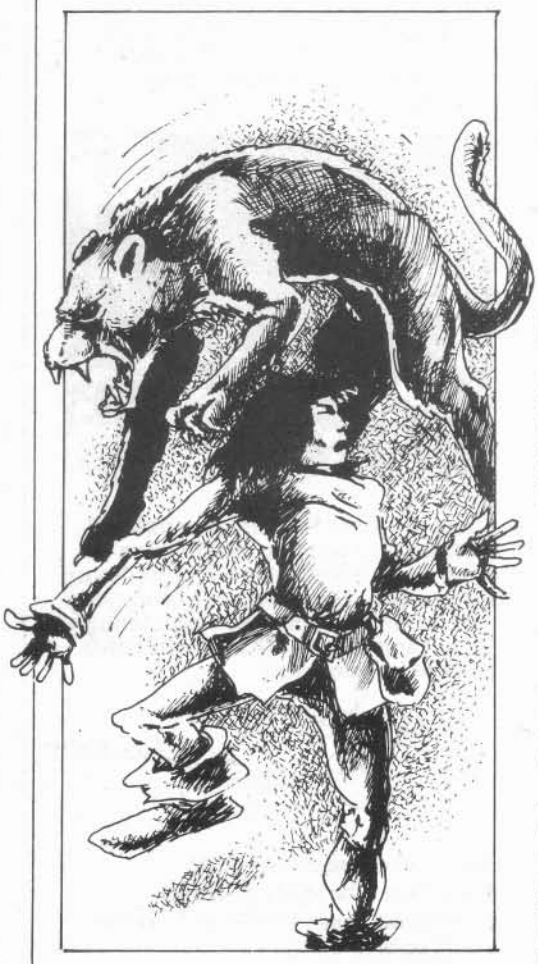
Treasure Chest *is a regular department featuring readers' ideas for* AD&D. *This issue, a special two-page feature which is . . .*

All Part of Life's Rich Pageant

The possibilities for role-playing outside of the dungeon in *AD&D* are often talked about, but there is little available to help simulate the unwanted events of everyday life. The following *Events Table* with the appropriate explanations should, however, cause a few problems for dungeon-bound characters. It is especially effective when they start engaging in months of spell research or other such rewarding pursuits. The events system works in a similar manner to the disease and parasitic infestation tables in the *DMG*. Once a week, roll d20 for each player in the campaign; a result of 20 indicates a special event has occurred, which is then chosen at random (roll d100) from the *Events Table*. Some of these will require playing through with the affected character(s); others can be presented as a *fait accompli*, either immediately or at an appropriate time. After all, if the players take enough interest in some of the goings on around them, it seems only fair that other people will sometimes take a close interest in them. 'Home, sweet home' may never seem quite the same again.

EVENTS TABLE

Dice Roll (d100)	Event
01–06	Accident
07–16	Animal Taken Ill
17–19	Arrested
20–22	Assassin
23–25	Bargain
26	Battle
27–31	Burgled
32–36	Conversion Attempt
37–38	Disaster
39–40	Duel
41–50	Faulty Goods
51–54	Friendship
55–59	Mugging
60–62	Offered Job
63–69	Pockets Picked
70–75	Conned
76–85	Rumour
86–87	Miscast Spell
88–90	Legal Action
91–99	Witness Crime
00	Other



EXPLANATION OF EVENTS

1. Accident. The character suffers a mishap such as falling downstairs or being hit by a runaway animal. Roll d20:

1–18 Limb broken, useless for d4+4 weeks. Restricts movement, or shield or weapon use. Limb may be *healed*.
19 Limb crushed, permanently damaged unless *healed* (or better).
20 Limb severed, permanently damaged unless *regenerated*.

2. Animal Taken Ill. One of the character's animals (if any) sickens (roll for the disease on the *DMG* tables). Depending on the precautions taken, the illness may spread to other animals. Curative spells and potions have a 20% chance of working on animals.

3. Arrested. The character (and possibly his friends) is arrested for committing a real, trumped-up or imaginary offence. The nature of the charge will depend on the campaign and the character's activities. Alternatively, the legal system from *Irilian* (*Best of White Dwarf Scenarios 3*) could be used. The base chance of being found guilty is 100%, modified as follows:

Per point of WIS	−1%
Per point of INT	−1%
Per point of CHA	−2%
Per level	−2%
Actual Guilt	+25%

Bribery (if the situation allows it) and social status should also influence the outcome of the trial. Characters may elect to make a jailbreak of course!

4. Assassin. A contract has been put out on the character by, for example, enemy of his family or a defeated enemy. The assassin would, in normal circumstances, be of similar level to the player character, unless the paymaster is particularly wealthy or particularly desperate. The method used will depend on Guild practice and the PC's habits. In addition, the character may or may not be aware of the contract depending on the extent of his underworld contacts.

5. Bargain. The next time the character goes shopping he gets a bargain. An item may be particularly cheap, or it may be especially well made. The exact value of the gain should be in accordance with the PC's level. Examples of bargains could be a suit of leather armour which is as effective as studded leather, a bulky item having low encumbrance or a minor magical item sold as a normal object.

6. Battle. The home town, city or village of the character is attacked or besieged by hostile troops such as the private army of a neighbouring landowner, or even a large and particularly brave group of brigands. As a recognised adventurer and combatant, the character will be called up and given a temporary, low-paid position in the militia. Other PCs in the area are also likely to be involved and the conflict will therefore require extensive work by the DM.

7. Burglary. The character's house or lodgings attract the attention of a local thief. The thief will have staked out the premises beforehand and the results are determined as follows (roll d10):

1–4 Adventurer is away on a journey and the thief is undisturbed.
5–8 The adventurer is out but nearby, with a 2 in 6 chance of returning to find the thief.
9–10 The adventurer is at home when the thief arrives.

This event requires details of any precautions made by the character to prevent such intrusions. The thief may also be disturbed by inn staff or servants. The DM should choose which items owned by the PC have been taken. It is also important to note what the character is carrying in the event that he returns home and disturbs the thief. For example, a high priest might not clatter down to the Goblin's Giblets in his plate mail, but might well be wearing some lighter protection to discourage the less sociable elements of society.

8. Conversion Attempt. A cleric (of randomly selected alignment and religion) attempts to convert the character to his religion (use the rules provided in *Best of White Dwarf Articles 2*). A saving throw under wisdom means that the character is sensible enough not to listen in the first place. However, there is a 25% chance that the attempt will be made after plying the character with 2d4 drinks, and the saving throw against wisdom and the conversion attempt are made using the reduced wisdom scores indicated by the alcohol effects table in the *DMG*. Should the conversion attempt prove successful by these means, if the character can then make a save vs spells then he was too drunk to remember being converted and is unaffected. (This is not to say that the character's deity won't rebuke this stupidity with a real grand-daddy of a hang over . . .)

9. Disaster. The PC's home is completely destroyed by fire, earthquake, storm or tempest. No one will be hurt, but all items owned will have to save at least once against fire or crushing blow (depending on the 'act of the gods') or be destroyed.

10. Duel. The character is challenged to a duel – the reasons may be varied, but family feuds are the most common. Types of duel which are possible include:

Archery [firing at butts (AC10) at 100 yds; score 1 point for each hit, 5 shots each].

Fencing [using foils, but a hit counts as 1 point scored].

Fisticuffs [use the pummelling tables].

Two-handed swords, with chain mail [to the death].

Duels should be fought without recourse to magic – a judge may be useful to ensure fair play.

Although a character need not accept a challenge, the consequences of refusing (loss of face, a reputation for cowardice, etc) should be played up by the referee.

11. Faulty Goods. One of the player's next purchases turns out to be flawed in some manner, for example, a sword that shatters on the first 'to hit' roll of a 1, a flask of oil that doesn't burn or a magic item that has been wrongly identified.

12. Friendship. The character meets a person of the opposite sex, and they get on rather well together. This person should be of a compatible race, and probably of the same alignment (if not religion). For compatibility; wisdom, intelligence and charisma of this friend should be similar to the player-character's, although effective charisma towards each other will be 18. For players/DMs unwilling to role-play the outcome of a blossoming relationship, use the following to determine the outcome (roll d6):

1 Decide to split up.
2-5 Stay friends, consult this table every six months.
6 Decide to make relationship permanent.

Marriage, etc, could cause some problems for a character's profession, guild or religion.

The DM should bear several points in mind regarding a husband and wife character team. Firstly they should always be separate personalities and not become a single 'character' with twice the power, nor a master and henchman team. Secondly, spouses are not monster fodder and have the same instinct for self-preservation as their partners. Finally, spouses in a party are entitled to equal shares of treasure, but the couple's living expenses will be twice as great.

Although the overall situation needs tight control, it can prove very entertaining. I know of one ambitious cleric whose fighter wife, run by the same person, is always getting him into trouble.

13. Mugging. A fairly obvious encounter to the detriment of the character. The villains of the piece are most likely to be low-level ruffians, but could quite reasonably be high level thieves or assassins. Professionals, such as assassins, might have less qualms about killing the character if he is of high status in the community.

14. Offered a Job. A character showing outward signs of success in his adventuring career attracts the attention of town officials. Jobs offered could include those of a military position (fighters), civil administration, or religious ('We're looking for a dedicated young cleric to set up our new temple the other side of the Orcstooth Pass. We were wondering . . .'). Although such jobs will be relatively low paid, they might interest a character considering retirement or looking for a different challenge in life. Refusing such plum positions will undoubtedly decrease the status of the character in the eyes of officialdom.

15. Pockets Picked. Whilst out around town, in a tavern, etc, the character attracts the attention of a passing thief who attempts to liberate smaller, valuable items from the character. Such a thief is liable to have accomplices nearby in the event of trouble.

16. Conned. The character is hard done by or misled in a deal he makes. For example, some incompetent or dishonest weaponsmith tells him that the pretty sword he has just found is a simple +2, when in fact it is a *Dancer*. The character need never know about this, but it stops him from getting rich too quickly!

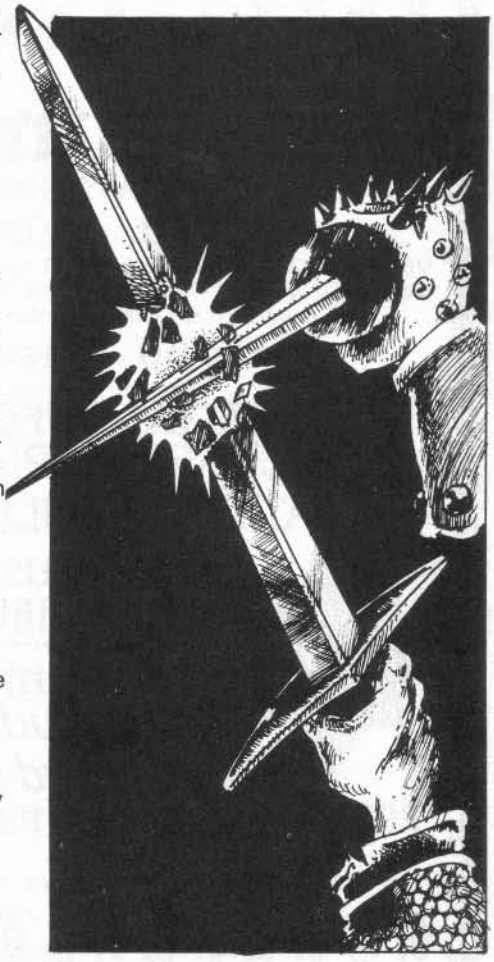
17. Rumours. The character hears a rumour concerning the next adventure he is going on, or one that will lead to another adventure. Not all rumours will be useful, but all should have a truthful element to them, even if it is not immediately apparent.

18. Miscast Spell. Freak conditions on the astral plane, Athena nodding off for a moment, or just Loki up to his tricks again, result in the next spell cast on or by the character going wrong in some manner. The precise effect is up to the DM, but the results should be spectacular!

19. Legal Action. An official complaint is levelled at the character (by an orc tribe for damages done to their caves, for example) with financial damages being claimed. The exact details depend on the DM and the campaign, but the event is useful if only to keep characters on their toes in monetary matters.

20. Witness Crime. This could well be a similar offence to the one a character might be arrested for, but the possibilities are endless. Does the character join in the bar room brawl, or does he cast *sleep* on the ensuing melee? Does he help the victim of a mugging, join the attack, or blackmail the muggers?

With a little bit of thought on the part of the DM, the opportunities for spicing up out of dungeon activities are wide-ranging. Remember one thing: give the player characters just as hard a time of it as they would give others in the same situation! □



Dragonroar has been well received by the gaming public. Its fresh approach to role-playing and its use of audio tapes has already won it many fans. For those tired of the same boring old monsters, players are given the chance to pit their strength against squamous killer penguins, thick-skinned manelephants and deadly warhedgehogs. Newcomers have found it easy to learn. With instructions on tape and the tape solo adventure they have rapidly travelled to Home. Already players are producing adventures for the system. The first of these, 'The Ballad of Skiirn La'ana' will be available shortly. With Dragonroar Fantasy Figures becoming available, the future looks good. However, like many games, Dragonroar is as good as you - players and Fatemasters - can make it. That is your challenge - to make the finest FRP system to date - Go For It!

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Tabletop Heroes *is a regular column covering modelling and painting hints and tips, by Joe Dever.*

DIORAMAS

Part One: Preparation and Planning

This month I've chosen to turn the *TTH* spotlight on a subject that combines both figure painting and modelling to an equal degree, and I will be revealing the basic techniques used to recreate realistic scenic effects when constructing dioramas.

A diorama is a miniature scene that depicts figures in a natural setting or habitat. The most common type of setting is an open display (more accurately described as a 'scenic base') where figures are shown off on a base without sides and with a minimum of background detail. By comparison, boxed dioramas, where the illusion of perspective is created through the use of painted backgrounds and internal lights, are seldom seen (as yet) in fantasy painting competitions, at least in the UK.

Firstly, decide on the nature of your scene. The finished diorama will represent a frozen moment in time, almost like a three-dimensional photograph, but it should also put across a feeling of what is about to happen or has occurred immediately beforehand. It is often very effective to create a humorous incident within the scene; whether this is the focus of attention or merely a small embellishment, it will add greatly to the diorama's final appeal. Next, consider the size and shape of your base, and bear in mind that it should show off your figures in much the same way as a frame does a picture. Too large and the diorama will look empty and lack drama; too small and your figures will look cramped, and in an unnatural relationship to each other. Try a dry run, experimenting with the position of your figures on the base before fixing them. As a general rule, avoid aligning the visually dominant elements of your diorama parallel to the edge of the base. You'll achieve a more striking effect if they are fixed at an angle, breaking up the symmetry of the base. Further interest can be achieved if the scenic ground does not copy the exact shape of the base, but has some rough or irregular edges. Single models and smaller groups look good on a round base, for the shape does not dictate one single viewpoint. The straight edges of a rectangular of square base invite you to view the diorama from a certain angle, although this does make them an ideal choice for scenes which have one particular good side. Not to be overlooked are natural materials such as bark, slate, rock and sections of tree trunk, whose irregular shapes make for interesting bases, but whatever your choice, be sure that the base is always strong and stable. The next step is building up the contours of the base. For simple groundwork use materials like *Tetrion, Das Pronto* or *Milliput* applied directly to the base and shaped with a sculpting tool or spatula. Rocks, stones and plants (such as lichen or mosses) can be pushed into the material and will be held secure when it sets. When depicting a low hill, use layers of polystyrene tile on the basic structure before applying your groundwork material; weight is an important factor if you want your finished work to be portable. With wooden or perspex bases, you'll need to roughen the surface to help your groundwork material to adhere and prevent it from breaking up once it has set. Try scoring the surface with a cross-hatched pattern using a modelling knife, but take care to avoid any part of the base that will not be covered by groundwork.

Next month I shall deal with how to recreate different ground effects, from mud and earth to snow and sand, and looking at some cheap everyday materials that can be used to simulate foliage, water and man-made surfaces.

This Month's Photographs

Fig 1 shows you what can be achieved with wire, *Milliput* and a vivid imagination. The bat-like creature carrying a converted *Citadel* orc was scratch-built by David Foster, and was placed as a runner-up in the recent (and sadly last) *Citadel Open Day* painting competition.

If your thought you were getting good at painting banners, then take a long sobering look at John Blanche's minotaur in *Fig 2*; truly a masterpiece in every sense. Perhaps John had problems deciding which of the 3 optional heads to use that come with the new *AD&D* minotaur (*ADD86*: £1.95), because he's ended up using all three! Thirty-two hours of painstaking effort went into creating this figure which features a wealth of fine detail. All this work paid off, for the beast won first prize in the single figures category in the *Games Day* Masters' Painting Competition. Note the mouth of an *AD&D* umber hulk (*ADD77*: £1.95) grafted onto the stomach, the scratch-built venus fly trap (courtesy of Kevin Adams), boar's head and toadstools on the base, and the owl perched on top of that incredible standard (hard to imagine that it started life as the metal of a tomato purée tube!). The motto, by the way, means 'forever and ever', and refers (according to JB) to the minotaur's legendary lost love – the Mona Lisa. The shield is a washer built up with modelling putty and finished with washes of drawing ink, and the realistic moss that covers the banner pole is a mix of sand and glue. When it dried, it was undercoated with matt white acrylic and then washed with Apple Green (*Windsor & Newton*) drawing ink before being dry-brushed with a pale green acrylic paint to show off the highlights.

Fig 3 features the magnificent diorama by designer Nick Bibby which came first in the diorama category of the Masters' Painting Competition. As in *Fig 2*, much of the fine detail was scratch-built and applied to a factory casting, however, in this case, the towering warrior standing at the base of the rocky column is also a scratch-built 'addition'. Note the *Asgard* giant, *Ral Partha* succubus and beautifully painted leopard (*Ral Partha* winged leopard – without the wings!). The column was formed by gluing stones around a wire core, then painting them with grey enamels. The pool was formed with layers of clear casting resin (more about that next month) and the reeds were bristles of an old brush inserted into the groundwork material before it set.

Fig 4 shows one of the latest additions to *Akheton's* fortification range; a circular hut with interior (*20VT30*: £1.95). Their medieval range of buildings is now over thirty items strong, enabling gamers to recreate an entire medieval village or fantasy fortification on their gaming table. Also, they have added a new 'Barbarian' range to their Dark Ages items, all of high quality and very competitively priced.

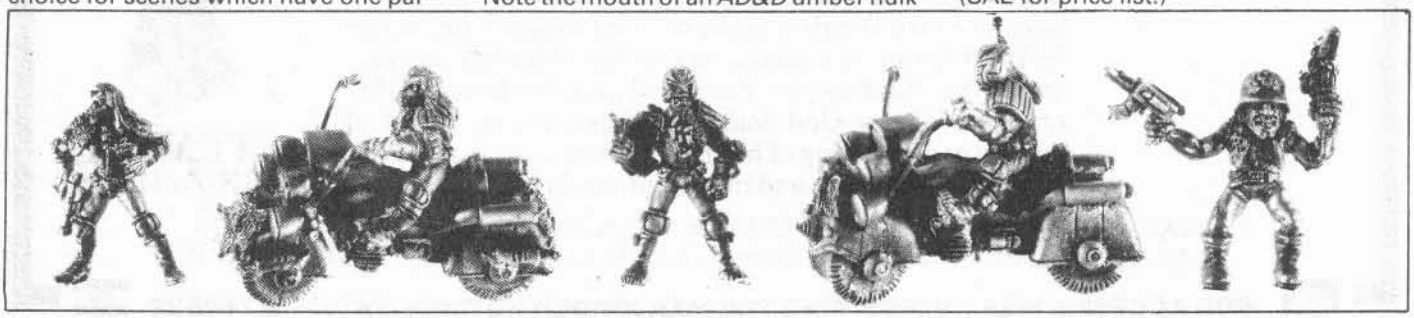
In *Fig 5*, squatting in all its chaotic magnificence, we see a *Citadel* demon (*C34*: £2.50). This figures was painted by Tarry Higgins, inspired considerably by the advice and painting style of Tim Olsen. □

Useful Addresses

Citadel Miniatures, Chewton Street, Hilltop, Eastwood, Notts. (SAE for latest release broadsheet.)

Ahketon Fortifications, 190-194 Station Road, Harrow, Middx HA1 1JU. (SAE for lists.)

Asgard Miniatures, Unit 22, Bar Lane Industrial Park, Basford, Notts NG6 0HT. (SAE for price list.)



Law and disorder: Anderson, Dredd and Gestapo Bob Harris – Citadel style!

Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3

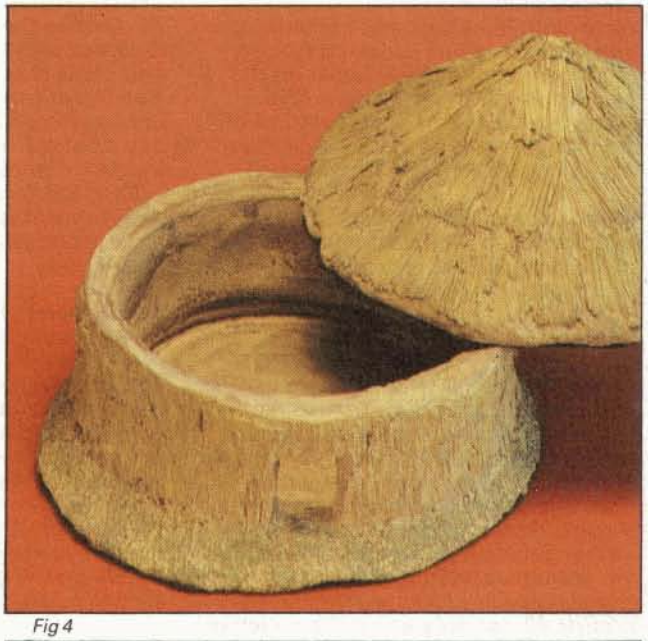


Fig 4

Fig 5

All photographs by Joe Dever

The letters page suffers from a cruel twist of fate this month. The additional pages in WD *(including the extra letters) have resulted in all our deadlines being shifted forward – as a result, the usual crop of letters concerning issue 71 have yet to materialise! Your poor letters page editor would like to remind you to rectify the letters shortage by next month (or else he and the extra letters get the chop!).*

This mad rush to meet deadlines brought about some strange sequencing in WD70.

David Thomson, Portsmouth: Whose idiotic idea was it to have the *Dead or Alive* article with the *In Too Deep* scenario on the next page? No more silly jokes please!

The editorial assistant is a secret Dead or Alive fan – does this explain everything?

Ruth Lee, Chelmsford: After reading Miss Carbery's letter (*WD70*), I have a suggestion for her. Why not just ask your DM if he has any scenarios that involve, say, a pub run and dominated by women. Or a dungeon whose monsters are controlled by some all-powerful amazon? See how he reacts.

If he takes exception to the idea, brain him, take over the job and run the pub/dungeon yourself. I'm with you all the way in banishing male chauvinism.

Oliver Dickinson, Haxby: I thoroughly agree with Miss Carbery on the illustrations, as I have had occasion to comment before, and in particular on the *Thrud* episode in *WD67* (also *68*!). I mean couldn't Carl Critchlow think of anything funnier and less sexist to do with a female warrior than that?

Dave Dickens, West Byfleet: I would like to point out to Miss Carbery that the so-called 'soft-porn' image of fantasy is one I happen to like.

Yes, er . . . quite.

Oliver: It may not be much help to Miss Carbery to suggest she come on over to *RuneQuest* Glorantha instead, where there are plenty of role-models for independent females, from Jar-eel the Razoress, superhero of the Lunar Empire, down to Griselda of the many (rather dubious) accomplishments! Funnily enough, a letter making very similar complaints has just appeared in *Different Worlds 40*, not only about the milieu of the game, but the fact that the writer kept getting interrupted when she was trying to participate. If you women players have this problem, Griselda has a suggestion: look the guy right in the eyes and say, 'If you interrupt me one more time, I'm going to carve your ears off.' Of course, she says, you have to be prepared to make good on it, and she has to admit she compromised: she only carved one of the guy's ears off.

Oliver is a noted champion of the RuneQuest *game, as are other readers.*

Richard Laing, Canterbury: My major complaint concerns the lack of *RuneQuest* scenarios in recent issues. When *RuneRites* went bimonthly I expected an increase in the number of scenarios for this excellent game, but in all my *WDs* (from *WD56*) I have only noticed one *RQ* scenario (*On the Road, WD59*).

I know several people who prefer *RQ* to *AD&D* or any other game and I'm sure I am expressing the views of many when I plead for more scenarios for this excellent game. Surely *RuneQuest* deserves more than a single page every two months?

Actually, I'd have thought that RuneRites *going bimonthly (from monthly) would have been seen as a sign of fewer* RQ *items in the magazine. The main problem in deciding whether or not to cover* RQ *as extensively as other fantasy games has been gauging the popularity of* RQ2 *after the introduction of* RQ3 *– the* Games Day Awards *are the first real feedback we've had concerning the game and show that the support is still there. Bearing this in mind, we hope to maintain the* RuneRites *column in some form, and print the odd article and scenario in the near future.*

Greg Stafford was rumour-mongering on his recent visit, and there may well be some good news concerning RQ3 *in the near future.*

Jamie Revell, Hexham: Your departments, especially *Starbase* and *RuneRites*, seem to be very rules orientated. The combat rules for these games are perfectly adequate already, without you complicating matters. Still, I think that columns for these games are a good idea. Those readers, such as Darren Bennett, who complain about such columns presumably do not play the game. Anyone who complains about such columns purely on the grounds of the system they support is being rather selfish.

Dan 'Dare' Coombs, Pershore: Do me and others a favour. Unless any really original rules expansions come up, forget 'em. Unless you're boggled by any original new monsters, forget 'em. Concentrate on making role-playing games really fun, with scenarios to stimulate the imagination, with new, exciting directions for the hobby to evolve into – to make role-playing truly adventuring from the armchair.

Who is this person? Surely there aren't others like him?

Bob Topley, Bristol: Destroy all your regular columns. They make me sick. Have only features. Do not talk down to your readers; most role-players are quite intellectual and don't print any new magic items, monsters, etc.

Well, I suppose that I can be wrong occasionally. So, perhaps regular columns like Critical Mass *should be axed?*

The departments are really just small features: we can destroy them if you really want, replacing them with, say, one-page features about game-specific . . . As for talking down to readers, we at WD *wouldn't dream of it!*

Mark Stansfield, Morecombe: I must echo other people's views on the direction of fantasy role-playing today. Every year, more and more games are released, and magazines such as yours find it impossible to cover them all. So instead they stick to the old favourites like *AD&D, Traveller, RQ*, etc. Granted you have tried to cover the newer, more unusual systems like *Golden Heroes, Cthulhu* and *Star Trek*, but these are the exceptions rather than the rule.

Instead of doing scenarios for a specific game at a specific level, I feel scenarios nowadays should be generic. We should be reading fantasy or science fiction scenarios, not *AD&D* scenarios or *Traveller* scenarios. No doubt this idea will meet with resistance, especially with certain members of the *WD* staff. However, it's time for a change in attitude and it's up to *White Dwarf*, as the premier fantasy magazine, to lead the way.

Although we're wary about generic scenarios, we are interested in seeing them and wouldn't just dismiss them out of hand. However, scenarios can obviously be influenced by a certain style of gaming, and many of the generic scenarios we have received in the past are merely tied-system scenarios with the statistics taken out. Any improvement on this would be welcome.

Geoff Williams, Sanbridgeworth: The way John Grandidge insists on calling *Cthulhu, Traveller, RuneQuest* et al minority games (*WD70*) is very condescending, and he is obviously a subscriber to that dying school of thought that holds that all other games are in some way inferior to *AD&D*.

His letter implies that there is no place for intelligent, well-written and thought-provoking readers' contributions for

these 'minority' systems in *Fiend Factory*, for example, which strikes me as being very odd. From my experience, *RQ* and *Traveller* parties are far less likely to kill creatures on sight than *AD&D* parties.

I hope that it is he and others of his ilk, not the correspondent who he complains about, that represent the 'handful of people' which *White Dwarf* could well do without.

Paul Harcourt, Harlow: John (Grandidge) appears to have misunderstood my thoughts. I don't want catalogues full of monsters for 'minority' systems, rather, his letter prompted me to use *Fiend Factory* as an example, since John mentioned it.

Surely all reasonable players would welcome a change in the *Noticeboard* like 'Next issue – a science fiction adventure and a fantasy adventure, plus an article on the influence and powers of secret societies in Gothic Horror games.' Multi-system adventures and articles deserve much more coverage, and I hope for the sake of the hobby that most *WD* readers will agree.

Ian Encke, Portsmouth: I was sad to hear the final death knell of *Treasure Trap* sounded in *WD69*, as no doubt there are thousands of ex-*TT* members who have, like me, harassed the unfortunate staff at Chislehurst Caves.

It would be far sadder if the demise of *TT* also spelled the end of live-action role-playing in this country. There must be many *TT* societies such as my own (the Orkney Folk) scattered around the country, trying to keep the game alive. What is needed is a contact method for *TT* societies who want to play against each other – will *WD* provide a contact page? While you're at it, how about some articles on live action role-playing?

Or how about publishing the *TT* rules? With no standard, there will soon be hundreds of variants being played, and inter-society play will be a nightmare.

Will *WD* rise to the challenge 'Save Live Action Role-Playing'?

No.

Jeffrey Ford, St Helens: Having just watched the *BBC's* 'Watchdog' programme, I am sure many other people will regard Dave Hewitt with disgust. I'm glad that I didn't decide finally to go to *Treasure Trap/Timescape*. It just shows that no one is safe.

Unfortunately, all our intrepid reporters were indisposed at the time and missed the programme!

Bob Topley: The most disgusting part of the whole mag is the lettercol. For a start, do not print whole letters and forget the 'Dear *WD*' rubbish. Add editorial replies and pick interesting comments out. It's far more fun and interesting to read. If out of 45,000 readers you can only get six letters, there is something wrong. You need a minimum lettercol of 4 sides long and should be receiving at least 100 letters a month.

You seem to be a month or so behind the editor! The current style of the Letters *page should allow much more feedback, although the number of letters* coming *in could be healthier. Where you get the figure of '6' letters per month from, I really don't know!*

Rhodri James, Preston Wynne: I just had to write in about Pete Tamlyn's article in *WD69*. The article itself is wonderful, and I admit that the idea of translating the *GH* campaign ratings into fantasy and SF games never occurred to me, but I have one big grouch about the way they're handled in *GH*. Personal Status. This rating quite simply fails to work for a number of interesting characters that have cropped up in our *Champions* campaign. (*Hsss . . . Evil . . . Hsss . . . –Ed.*) The rules actively discourage characters who don't fit into the standard heroic mould. The rating fails to take into account the most important aspect of a personality – what the character thinks of himself.

If you don't want to scrap the whole thing as a bad job, try replacing Expression with Satisfaction (how well the character is dealing with his personal problems) and modifying Public Response to consider whether or not it actually matters to the character. Perhaps Security ought to be modified by Ego as well.

I realise that this is going to sound like gibberish to most people, but I hate to see something which could be applied so widely being so blinkered.

Pete Thomson, Preston: *White Dwarf* needs to try and poach as many of the people who read *Imagine* (but not *WD*) as possible, before Paul Cockburn and company recover from the initial shock and start to produce an independent British magazine. (*Too late, you fools, too late . . . –Ed.*) This is more likely to rival *WD* due to the fact that it would not have to adhere to *TSR's* petty whims.

Perhaps this could be done by introducing some of *Imagine's* features, such as interviews with personalities, a fanzine section and short SF/fantasy stories. These new features could be fitted into your extra pages on a bi/trimonthly basis.

Personally I'd like to see a fanzine section in *WD*, but as I'm writing to someone who undoubtedly knows much more about fanzines than I, I won't dwell on the subject.

White Dwarf *has tried covering fanzines before, and has taken an interest in* Imagine's *coverage to see what the general feeling is towards fan magazines. However, judging from the number of fanzines on show at* Games Day, *it seems unlikely that we will be printing much about them in the near future. The sheer number of fanzines available at the moment makes fair treatment of each one impossible – at least as far as allotting a page of* WD *to them is concerned. In the case of the 60 or so fanzines exhibited at* Games Day, *each would end up with about a 20-word mention!*

There are too many new fanzines on the market at the present for this aspect of 'the hobby' to be regarded as healthy – in this respect, the Imagine *articles did more harm than good. We would be loath to repeat the errors of* Imagine *in* White Dwarf!

Marcus Rowland, London: I've found a minor mistake in my scenario *The Surrey Enigma*, which was repeated in my article in *WD70*. Both mention the Short Magazine Lee-Enfield military rifle and say that it is like a .30-06 rifle. However, the SMLE was a repeating rifle renowned for a high firing speed, and the normal .30-06 speed of one shot per two rounds is obviously wrong. A speed of one shot per round is more appropriate, and should be used throughout. Damage should be reduced to 2d6+1.

There are two other mistakes in *The Price is Right*. Although the guinea was obsolete in the 1920s, it was still possible to write guinea cheques, which would be honoured by any bank. Rifle ammunition should cost seventeen shillings, not seven shillings.

Oliver Dickinson: The statement about Treasure Trove in *WD69* (*The Surrey Enigma*) is incorrect. The law only applies to gold and silver, and in fact such items are only Treasure Trove if it can be argued that there was intent to recover them. Hence, the Sutton Hoo treasure, from the graves, became the property of the landowner, as pointed out in the recent *BBC* programme, and so would the items found in the grave in this scenario.

I should also point out that bronze swords will not be late pre-Roman; iron had been used for several centuries for weapons and other items by the time the Romans came on the scene.

Letters concerning George Stepanek's outburst in WD69 *have still been coming in . . .*

Robert Middleton, Woodlesford: I am writing regarding George Stepanek's letter which was printed, but should not have been, in *WD69*.

I myself am an 'older gamer', as he so proudly proclaims himself to be, yet I must say that I was absolutely disgusted by his remarks regarding 'younger gamers'.

Although Mr Stepanek is obviously a very selfish 'old man', he has no right whatsoever to dictate to younger, inexperienced gamers. Role-playing games and related magazines such as *WD* are there to be experienced and enjoyed by anybody, regardless of age, and the producers of such have a duty to provide material suitable for all ages.

Let us 'older gamers' have more patience and understanding for newcomers – they too deserve the unique experience which only role-playing can give.

Interesting that you should disagree with the decision to print George's letter. However, I'm of the opinion that all views should be represented on the Letters *page, even if they can be a little hurtful at times.*

Finally . . .

Bob Topley: Blah! Blah!

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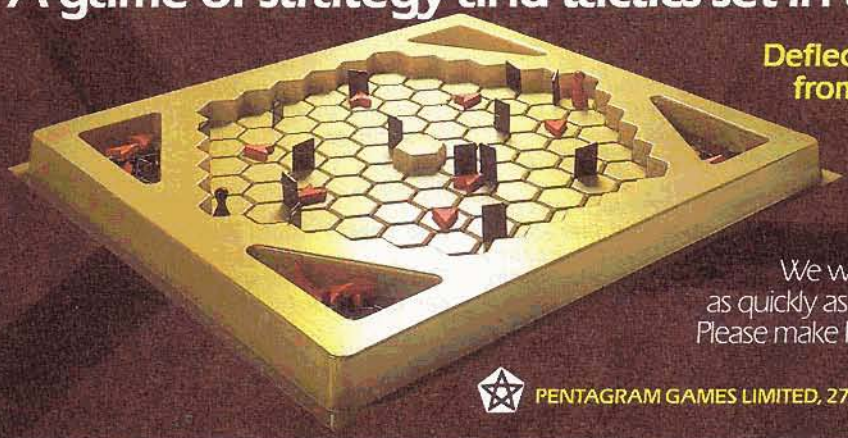

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WERE ALL GONNA DIEEEE!!!
SHARRAP DINALT! CAN'T SEE MYSELF THINK!
CHAOS!
AGH!!
WHAT-ABOUT -THE-QUAKE? HELLO?
GETCHA FOOT OUTTA ME EAR!
CRAK!
SPROK!
Ship's computer here: Do you want me to continue hovering or would you like me to drop like a stone?
JUST HANG THERE! GAVIN! ENGINE ROOM! AND LEAVE THE AXE!
GAVIN... NOW PLEASE?
DON'T RUSH ME!
2. The Osprey tries to lift off from a Yorbund space port when suddenly an earthquake strikes . . .
DAMAGE COMPUTER.
Blip Blip Bloop Squeee
Severe . . . very severe . . . so severe I'll have to spend at least 3 weeks in dry dock for a complete refit of new and luxurious –
COMPUTER!
Oh alright superficial damage to aft lifters and the jump drives phasing into imbalance and some abrasion to the superstructure . . . but it still smarts!
OKAY. IT'S A CHOICE BETWEEN BEING SHREDDED BY JUMPDRIVE TO DIE LIGHTYEARS FROM YOUR FEET, OR GOING BACK TO... YORBUND...
DECISIONS... DECISIONS... THE PRESSURES OF COMMAND... etc.
BLIP!
SYRENA – MAKE HIM CLEAN IT UP – AND BEAT HIM WITH EXTREME PREJUDICE IF HE DOESN'T – NO – DELAY THAT ORDER... He might enjoy it....
YOU MEAN – YES. MY Gobbdd! WELL IF WE ALL IGNORE IT MAYBE IT'LL GO AWAY.
Oh HEAVENS TO BETSY CAPTAIN FLINN – YOU KNOW THAT SOURCE OF ENERGY HAS BEEN REVEALED FOR THE FIRST TIME – WHERE'S YOUR SENSE OF ADVENTURE?
CAPTAIN! I'VE GOT SOMETHING ON THE MONITOR!
NO CAP'N – YOU MISUNDERSTAND A STRONG ENERGY SOURCE AT THE EPICENTRE OF THE QUAKE!
FAR FROM HERE WITH MY SENSE OF DIRECTION.
Gahh Finny... WE DO NEED TO LAND FOR REPAIRS...
RROOWWWHH!
Owww... I THINK IVE BRUISED MY UPPER ARM...
ME TOO
YOU TOO GAVIN?
YEP. I THINK I'VE BRUISED YOUR UPPER ARM TOO.
Ka-Thrs-Boom!!
THERE'S THE SOURCE OF THE... er... SOURCE – THE PYRAMIDS!!
LOOK AT THOSE Shadows!
. . . That plus a few tactless words from Hayes about killing two birds and the Osprey heads back for a landing . . .
The Osprey explodes into a million glowing fragments to rain down in a phosphorescent cloud . . .
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK ALL YORBUNDS HATE US FUNNY?
ZOOOMM!
GOFF!
Oh JUST A WILD HUNCH.
LET'S HOPE THERE'S NO YORBUND'S LIVING THERE TO GIVE US A HARD TIME
WE'RE ALL GONNA DIEEE!!!
BLEEP! BLEEP! BLEEP! BLEEP!
GET OUT FROM UNDER THE CONSOLES AND RAISE THE –
BURRRGH-THOOFF!
BISSK!
IS THIS THE END?
Will our heroes live to see another 'Rocky' sequel? Will Lloyds pay the insurance? Do you really care? Say you do! Clap your hands three times and say 'I believe in fairies, I do, I do, I do!' And they might yet live!
. . . to be continued . . .?

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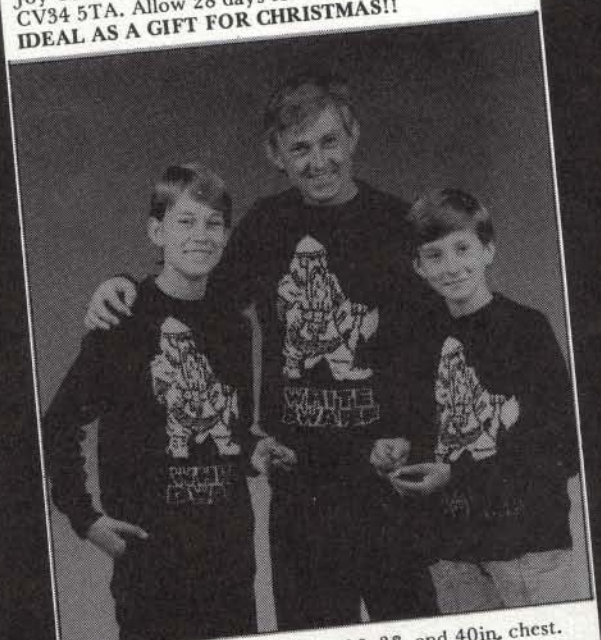

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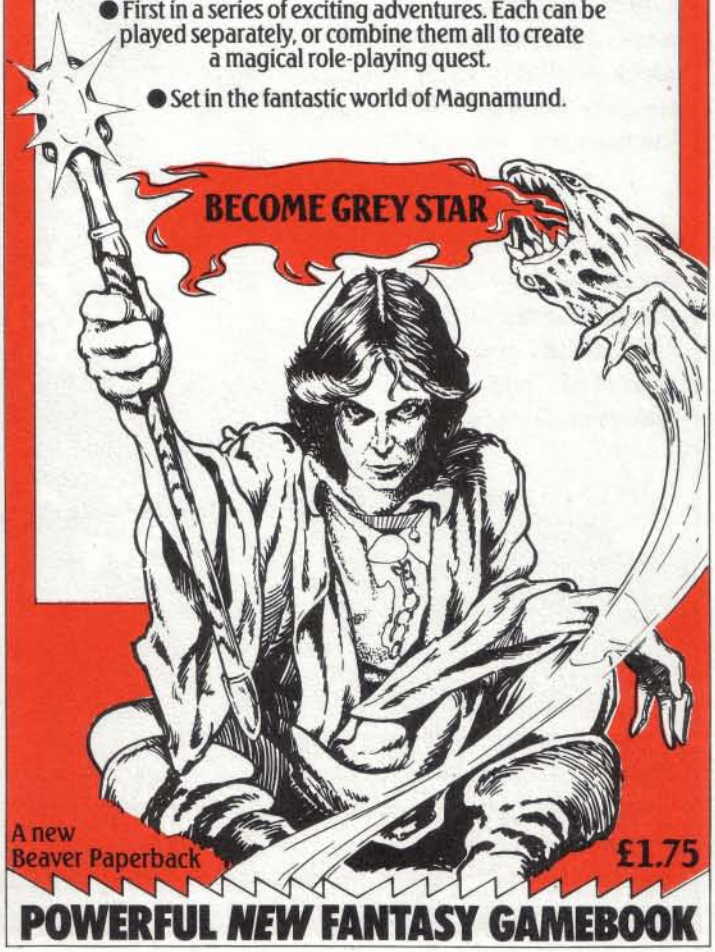

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BLOOD BATH AT GAMES DAY

Games Day '85 had a remarkably different flavour this year. Whether this could be attributed to the avant-garde T-shirts and programme, the northern nature of many of the staff or the huge number of games personalities from the States is a matter for conjecture. What was more immediately noticeable was the extra space for events – the seminar rooms being booked for the first time – and the fact that it was possible to get from A to B without being too badly crushed.

The main hall was home to a wide variety of gaming events; demonstration games from manufacturers, the official competitions and many games run by individuals just so that gamers could find something to do! The real show-stealer in the main hall, however, had to be the futuristic scenery the ubiquitous Players Guild had constructed for the *Judge Dredd* role-playing game demonstration. The photograph only hints at the amount of work that went into producing this masterpiece.

Meanwhile, up in the lofty heights of the seminar rooms, notable authors, artists and games inventors were revealing dark secrets to select audiences – select only because they were more tenacious or more aggressive in their attempts to get a seat in the smaller rooms.

Among the loathsome horrors that skulked around the terror-stricken audience at a talk by Marcus Rowland was a Malaysian stick insect – used to great effect demonstrating fear of the unknown! Together, Marcus and friend looked like a bizarre version of Long John Silver and his parrot!

Slipping easily into the role of Robert Robinson, Steve Jackson chaired an amiable, but hard-fought quiz. The first of its kind, it saw a well deserved victory for the Games Workshop Gasbags, to wit Ian Livingstone, Jamie Thomson, Gary Chalk and Tim Olsen. Commiserations to the Hobby Games Hobbits (Marc Hanson, Kevin Sacklin, Trevor Mundell and Mark Ryan) who were obviously preoccupied with the fancy synthesiser music, the lights and . . . the score-girls.

The Day of Judgement – the Players Guild's masterful demonstration of the Judge Dredd role-playing game.

Greg Stafford puts Cthulhu in his place.

Special guests from across the water at this year's event were Greg Stafford (*Chaosium*), Steve Jackson (*Steve Jackson Games*), Jordan Weisman and Ross Babcock (*FASA*) and Pete and Olivia Fenlon (*ICE*). Greg Stafford, the man with iron lungs, spoke almost continuously all week-end, and also had the energy to join in the Sunday Roast along with sundry other mega-stars. For his efforts, Greg ended up being presented with a Cthulhu egg-timer, the latest objet d'art to grace gamers' homes.

Also picking up a strange object was Steve Jackson (the American version) who walked off with a special *Games Day* award – the *DragonLords Trophy*. Awarded last year to Paul Cockburn, this glittering prize is given to the person judged to have contributed most to humour in the gaming hobby. The exact nature of the award is a closely guarded secret, although it is vaguely connected with Gary Gygax!

On the whole, everything, ran as smoothly as could be expected, and grateful thanks must be extended towards this year's organiser, Paul Aagaard, for a successful and interesting convention. *Games Day* is certainly brightening up!

Kissy-kissy! Steve Jackson receives the DragonLords Trophy from a coy Ian Livingstone.

NEXT ISSUE

Star Spray – an adventure for *Middle-earth Role Playing*.

The American Dream – Golden Heroes scenario with artwork by Chris Achilleos.

Cults of the Dark Gods II – more unholy Cthulhu secrets.

Power and Politics – Derek Carver talks to *White Dwarf* about his new game, *Warrior Knights*.

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1st – *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*
2nd – *RuneQuest* 3rd – *Middle-earth*

BEST SF ROLE-PLAYING GAME
1st – *Traveller*
2nd – *Space Opera* 3rd – *Star Trek*

BEST CONTEMPORARY ROLE-PLAYING GAME
1st – *Call of Cthulhu*
2nd – *Golden Heroes* 3rd – *James Bond 007*

BEST ROLE-PLAYING PLAY-AID
1st – *Dungeon Floor Plans*
2nd – *AD&D DM's Screen*
3rd – *World of Greyhawk*

BEST SOLO GAMEBOOK
1st – *Fire on the Water*
2nd – *Sorcery!* 3rd – *Deathtrap Dungeon*

BEST FANTASY BOARDGAME
1st – *Talisman*
2nd – *Dragon Pass* 3rd – *Fellowship of the Ring*

BEST SF BOARDGAME
1st – *Judge Dredd*
2nd – *Car Wars* 3rd – *Dune*

BEST HISTORICAL BOARDGAME
1st – *Diplomacy*
2nd – *Kingmaker* 3rd – *Squad Leader*

BEST FAMILY BOARDGAME
1st – *Monopoly*
2nd – *Trivial Pursuit* 3rd – *Risk*

BEST COMPUTER ADVENTURE GAME
1st – *The Hobbit*
2nd – *Lords of Midnight* 3rd – *Doomdark's Revenge*

BEST COMPUTER ARCADE GAME
1st – *Elite*
2nd – *Spy Hunter* 3rd – *Knightlore*

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1st – *Citadel*
2nd – *Grenadier* 3rd – *Asgard*

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1st – *Citadel*
2nd – *Tabletop Games* 3rd – *Grenadier*

BEST HISTORICAL FIGURES MANUFACTURERS
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1st – *Warhammer*
2nd – *Laserburn* 3rd – *Striker*

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1st – *White Dwarf*
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1st – *Dagon*
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BEST NEW ROLE-PLAYING GAME
1st – *Golden Heroes*
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1st – *Star Trek III Ship Combat*
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WORST NEW GAME
1st – *Indiana Jones Role-Playing Game*
2nd – *Marvel Super Heroes* 3rd – *RuneQuest 3*

BEST GAMES MANUFACTURER
1st – *Chaosium*
2nd – *Games Workshop* 3rd – *TSR*

BEST SOFTWARE MANUFACTURER
1st – *Ultimate*
2nd – *Beyond* 3rd – *Acornsoft*

BEST GAMES INVENTOR
1st – Gary Gygax
2nd – Sandy Petersen 3rd – Steve Jackson (US)

BEST GAMES PERSONALITY
1st – Ian Livingstone
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Sale or Swap. *Traveller+* books, *Chivalry & Sorcery, MERP + Bree & B-Downs, FFs*. SAE to Juha Rajala, Laiduntie 12, 70780 Kuopio, Finland.

Star Trek £7, *CoC* £7, *The Vanished* £3, *Warhammer* and *FoF* £8 the pair, *Traveller* books 1-5 £5, 7 *Traveller* scenarios £5, *Dungeon Floor Plans 1-4* £5 the lot. ☎ Bedford 768569.

Clearance Sale: *SPI* etc boardgames. SAE for list to Steve Gilham, 6 Collenswood Rd, Stevenage, Herts.

Tense, nervous headache? Fed up with torcing to orcs, sick of throwing runestones at dead elves? Buy *Skullcrusher* 4 for express relief. 40pp of amazing hardware and chat! *AD&D* and *WH* for just 40p + A5 SAE/20p from Richard Langrish, Offchurch Vicarage, Warks CV33 9AL.

Another bloody zine!!! But *BoC 2* is different. Chat and humour zine for only 55p to: 28 Merryhills Drive, Oakwood, Middx.

For Sale: Superb condition: *WD 22-29; Imagine 1-16;* EGG autographed *AD&D. RuneQuest* rulebooks. Other FRP aids also available. Offers? ☎ 04252 78454.

Tried us yet?

Free Newsletter Special Offers
Club Discounts

Send SAE to *Draken Games*, Dept NL14, 132 Ramnoth Road, Wisbech, Cambs PE13 2JD. ☎ 0945 581529 (24 hr ansaphone).

For Sale. *CoC* Campaigns, *AD&D* Modules, *Traveller* items, *RuneQuest* items, *Warhammer*. Free gift – First 5 Buyers. ☎ 0204 696242 after 5pm.

Mitregames are looking for an enthusiast to join the staff as a full-time PBM gamesmaster. Contact: George Campbell, 189 Balham High Road, London SW12.

Superhero UK – 36 pages of SHRPG material including foldover heroes for 60p. Available from Jonathan Clark, 9 Mounthilly Road, Chapelton, Strathaven, Lanarkshire, Scotland.

Traveller. For only £1.50 you can receive Names, UPPs & Trade Classifications for a *Full Sector!!* (approx *640* worlds!!). Send a large SAE + £1.50 to: A B Cooper, 116 Bottesford Lane, Scunthorpe, South Humberside DN16 3QH.

Books. Get your ideas for *D&D/Traveller/Call of Cthulhu* from the many second hand books available each month. Prices range from 50p to £1. Send for the latest Science Fiction & Fantasy list enclosing SAE to *Peter French Books*, 13 Beauford Park, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton, Somerset TA2 6QJ. ☎ (0823) 76439 (after 6pm.)

HELP!

Clubs, contacts and events can be advertised once at no charge up to a maximum of 25 words. Further insertions at the rate of 15p per word (incl VAT).

To all and sundry whom these presents do or may concern, We Sir Garfield ffolkes-Hamilton; Council Member of the Anti Goblinoid League, Priest of the Great God Quetzecotyl, Myrmidon of the Guild of Fighters of Han Lee, send Greetings.

Know ye that following our Noble Crusade against the Ice Devils in the Cold Regions, We have been transported unto the Northern London Suburb called Tottenham, and art desirous of Adventure and Gain. If ye know of such sport within the creed of *AD&D* send word by fastest messenger unto my Squire, Keith Potter, 13 Beaconsfield Road, London N15 4SH ☎ 802 9138.

AD&D Swindon. Players required in Wilts/Berks/Glos/Oxon aged around 30. Daniel Spears, ☎ 0793 764880.

Regnak Longstrider Half-Elven has returned from the Troll Wars. Beware Kelnik Dark One for I come seeking revenge and will hunt you down like the treacherous cur you are. Prepare to die. *Answer if you dare.*

Ian Shenstone, get off at earth – Gut Splitter IV (Marc Ormerod).

Beginner new to RPG scene, quick learner, friendly easy going male (30) would like to join others age 20+ experience not essential willing to travel within 5 mile radius of Wembley, London. Mark, ☎ 908 4239.

Announcement. Mhoram lives, Ramore the unholy shall never find the hidden realm. The mace of Mhoram shall prevail! Death to Ramore!

London N6. 17-yr old FRPG seeks club/group or other players. Plays all major systems, willing to learn others. James, ☎ 340 2355.

Contacts wanted. Role-player seeking correspondence with other fantasy/war gamers. Some trading possible. Bill Osuch, 711 S Jenkins, Apt 3, Norman, OK 73069 USA.

Wanted. Scenario pack included in American *Star Trek* deluxe set. Dave, ☎ Ashington 854790.

Tomsk. Why did you betray Great Uncle Bulgaria? May your innards be strewn all over the common. Tobermory.

Dorking Area. 11 year old *D&D/Warhammer* player seeks other players/GMs to play with. Please write to John Carrington, Applegarth House, The Hildens, Westcott, Surrey. ☎ 889095.

AD&D DM seeks penpals. Purpose: ideas, inspiration, communication, sharing. Ladies & gentlemen. Try me. Robert Dalvin #162718, Rt 3, Box 2000, Hagerstown, MD 21740 USA.

Avone, I shall vanquish you, you do-gooder. Your magic mace won't help you against my sword. Signed in blood — Peter Theeril Strongarm Blake (long name).

Hermit would like to inform the Oxenfoord plonkers that he wants to suck their blood, especially Melody's.

Dolbian Beware! The lord Sauron has sent the three Ologs to deal with you. Your cousin Sharma awaits you in Bree. Viva Les Balrogs! – GM *(Les Balrogs? Who He? –Ed)*.

Penpal. Male expert *D&D* DM (14) seeks penpal (13+) who is interested in RPGs. Aran Gibney, 4 Church Road, Sutton, Dublin 13, Eire.

Bloodthirsty *AD&D* player asks is there a party in the Buckley area? Contact Peter Moon, 15 Bodoffa Dr, Buckley, Clwyd CH7 2PB.

Help! 12 year old boy seeks club which does real live gaming in South East. Play *MERP, T&T, D&D*. Richard, ☎ (0784) 56667.

Wanted *Steve Jackson's Undead* and *Necromancer* or *FGU's Bushido* for *Golden Heroes*. Sam Griffiths, ☎ Nottingham (0602) 820365 after 6pm.

Wanted! *CoC* with scenarios, will swap the *Fellowship of the Ring* ☎ Great Ayton 722357.

Wanted. *2000AD* (before issue 250 only). Will buy or swap for *S2, DMG, PHB, FF*. Send all offers to 5 Grovelands Close, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham, Gloucs GL53 8BS.

Wanted. People to form *AD&D* club in the Formby/Southport area. Write to: Colin, 10 Kent Avenue, Formby L37 6BQ.

D&D player desperate for action. Will learn *Warhammer, MERP* or *Battlecars*. Contact Simon (13), 5 Rosslyn Road, Heald Green, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 3DJ (enclose SAE).

PHB Wanted. Must be in good condition. ☎ 084421 3350 with price.

Swap. *Star Trek RPG*, never been used in play, for 2nd Edition *CoC* rulebooks. D I Macleod, 65 Newmarket, Isle of Lewis PA86 0DU.

MERP players wanted by aging GM (28) to join existing group. Advantageous if slightly looney. Nick Carter, 69 Argyle Ave, Weston-Super-Mare, Avon BS23 3RQ.

Wanted. *Deathswords* want your reviews on RPGs for their newsletter. Send to DS, Natal Farm, Little Baragh, Malton YO17 0UY.

18 yr old boy from Sweden would like to find an English penpal. My interests are *AD&D* and I play some wargames too. Please write to Patrik Johansson, Benredsv 15, 561 38 Huskvarna.

Trollpak, *Balastor's Barracks, Nomad Gods,* any back issues of *Wyrm's Footnotes*, or *Different Worlds, RuneQuest* figures, source packs etc urgently wanted. Mark, ☎ 0705 255765.

Wanted Urgently. A horse, a horse, will exchange for 88,799 square miles, a green and pleasant island Kingdom. Call Bosworth Field, ask for King(?) Richard.

Help. 17 year old RPG player in Killinchy area looking for anybody to play *RQ, Traveller, C&S* or anything else. Keith, ☎ 0238 541165.

Swap. Boxed *Basic, Expert, Companion D&D, Judges Guild 'Terror Beneath City State,' A1, X2* modules. Want *AD&D PHB, MM, DMG, MERP*. Matthew, ☎ (04557) 2028.

MERP GM (14) setting up Club in and about Hanworth. Also swap *D&D Basic* in reasonable condition for *MERP* supplements, *Citadel* figures. ☎ (01) 894 0916.

Help! Is there a fantasy wargames club or group in Sevenoaks? Marek, ☎ Sevenoaks 459630.

Wanted *'Into the Labyrinth' (TFT)* — any reasonable price paid. Also: *Codex*, any GM adventures. Contact: Bill, 40 Highfield Crescent, Linlithgow, West Lothian, Scotland.

Sharrock! Scared to play a real woman's game? The Beanidh Beannacht are coming for you!

Underwear. Please sell me a copy of *Trollpak* as I will pay large amounts of money. Will, ☎ (0533) 773780.

Help! Mik Hobbs, please contact the *Necropolis* fanzine editor as soon as possible as you haven't given us your address.

I, Maureen would like to announce on behalf of The Ultimate Feminists: Death to all male life-forms, especially Dwarves.

Swap. My *Basic D&D* rulebook and Module *O1* for anything interesting. Offers? Cormac, 17 Heatherdale Road, Camberly, Surrey.

Anybody out there? Male RPGer wanting errant female wizard as pen friend. Contact: Ross, 64 Scott Green Crescent, Gildersome, Morley, Leeds LS27 7DF. ☎ 538686.

15 yr old DM/player seeks club or players (*AD&D, Traveller*, etc) in Rugby/Coventry area. Rob, ☎ Rugby 832851.

Help! Final year student (21) seeks DMs/players in the Orpington area for most RPGs. Write: Mark Wadey, 85 Cowden Road, Orpington, Kent BR6 0TP.

Postal campaigns. Please help me by sending any info concerning non-profit postal campaigns to Jonas Grant, RR 6 Box 255, Evansville, IN 47711 USA.

Penpal Wanted. Players of *CoC*, and various others. I am 14, male and *desperate*. Contact: Louis Noble, 31 Mayfield Avenue, Mayfield Grange, Cramlington, Northumberland NE23 9AB.

Urgently Wanted *White Dwarfs 1-26* £23? Please quote how many you have and what you want for them: R Isbell, 7 Spring Lane, Lambley, Nottingham NG4 4PH.

Kerler and Canon Arnob, you wimps! Will you stop going on holiday while we're trying to have a decent bit of hack and slay!

Wanted Urgently — anyone in the Staines/Stanwell/Ashford area interested in playing *MERP*. Beginners or experienced players. Everything supplied. Contact: Damian, ☎ Ashford 52538.

Hong Kong. 11 yr old wants male/female pen pal in Yorkshire. Stuart Tate, 10th Floor, 24 Scenic Villa Drive, Pok Fu Lam, Hong Kong.

Urgently Wanted: Artist/Sculptor capable of making 25mm figures. ☎ Bishops Stortford 725033 (after 4.15pm).

Penpal Wanted: I play *D&D, AD&D,* and *Star Frontiers*. Contact: 21 Nankeen Street, Modbury Heights, 5092, South Australia, Australia.

Dubai. Player (*AD&D*, willing to learn other RPGs or boardgames) arriving end Sept. Contact M Parker, c/o Dubai Equestrian Centre, PO Box 1155.

Penpal Wanted! 16 yr old female fantasy addict, just started roleplaying, would like any tall, handsome (?!) male fantasy addicts (Books, FRPGs . . .) to write to me: Decca, 'Edmara', Wester Ord, Skene, Aberdeenshire AB3 6SR.

Help! Mature gamer seeks other gamers in the Burntwood/Lichfield area. I have *D&D, Traveller* and *Fighting Fantasy*, will learn others. Martin, ☎ Burntwood 75550.

RQ Players wanted by experienced referee. Male or Female, 16-18 yrs, in Witham/Braintree area. John, ☎ Silver End 843449.

Gamer (16) requires other gamers or club in in Barrow area played *AD&D, Bushido, Aftermath, RQ* will learn new games. Paul, ☎ 36968.

Urgently Wanted! *SPI* boardgames, esp *ACW (Stonewall, TSS etc)* or quads, but anything considered. Cash waiting. Also *Aftermath* players in SE London. Simon, ☎ 01 698 9046 evenings.

Announcement! Grumm Thornbeard has single handedly defeated the Skull Crusher Clan! Any more challenges? Contact: Thornbeard, Rt 2 Box 726, Copperas Cove, TX 76522 USA.

Module Swap. One for one, send SAE for list to David Hudson, 485 Coal Road, Whinmoor, Leeds LS14 1NW.

Lazrus-Orle. Kirish and I will never forget. Melus-Orle.

Wayne (16) wants USA penpals. Male or female. DMs *D&D* and *Traveller*. Contact: Wayne Peters, 24 Laleston Close, Gibbonsdown, Barry, South Glamorgan, Wales CF6 7UA.

Swap. *Cults of Terror/Prax*, three *Trollpack* books for any *Middle-earth* gameaids (Isengard etc). Chris Leonard, 4 Avon Close, Ettington, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire.

Help 18 yr old *Twilight 2000* and board wargamer would like to meet other players. Contact Paul, 214 Bradwell Coomon Boulevard, Milton Keynes. Cannot travel.

Just moved to the Westhill area of Aberdeen will play any game. Experienced in *CoC* and *D&D*. reply Paul Stevenson, 5 Morven Cres, Westhill, Aberdeenshire.

Wanted: *Grenadier* models Wizard's Room + old *Citadel* red dragon. vgc. ☎ Bishops Stortford 813660 (after 4.15pm).

Gwent C11th-C15th warrior seeks combat society or other lonely fighters in Gwent. I have chainmail hauberk and kettle hat. Contact: Graham, ☎ Little Mill 338.

Swap. My *Basic D&D* boxed set and *Expert* rulebook plus modules *B4* and *B7* for *RuneQuest, Cults of Prax* and *Questworld*. Mark, ☎ (061) 427 7582.

Warped Minds. Fantasy artwork service, requires new artists and original artwork. Send artwork samples to: Stuart Robertson, Helensfield Poultry Farm, Bungalow No 2, Clacks, Scotland FK10 4JA.

Highway Warriors. Swap *Car Wars* (as new) for good condition *Battlecars* or *Dawn of the Dead* game. Contact *Warped Minds* address.

The Black Sword of Geridon has killed Lati. Pladius prepare for the final battle. Langor contact Grorg Takand.

Celebrations! A hearty welcome to Kominion, returned to life at last after his brief acid-trip to Valhalla (a black dragon spat on him.) Eswin, Thurncos, Bailum.

Orpington players seek other *AD&D*ers Player/DMs for weekend gaming sessions. Either sex ages 13-18 preferred. Contact: Leslie, ☎ Orpington 72092 (evenings).

AD&D player (13) wants to know of clubs in West End of Glasgow. Martin, 101 Killock Dr, Knightswood, ☎ 041 959 9028.

Three 15 year olds wish to contact players or DMs to play *D&D* in Widnes area. Also beginners at *CoC*. Darren, ☎ 051 424 3133.

Free PBM. Playtesters desperately needed for new fantasy PBM. Absolutely free. Write to: Lands of Surth, 78 Green Dragon Lane, London N21 2LH enclosing SAE.

Wandsworth: Experienced (age 16+) referees/players wanted to supplement roleplaying group. Most major RPGs played, eg *AD&D, RQ, Star Trek*. John, ☎ 01 874 8957.

18 yr old player wishes to join a group in Kingston/Molesey/Walton area. Plays *D&D/T&T* learn anything. Jon, ☎ 01 941 2169.

Any goblins left out there? If so then contributions wanted for *Warhammer* fanzine, write to *Goblins Gazette*, 100 Marshalls Cls, New Southgate, London N11 1TG.

Just moved to Swindon and I am desperate to find someone else who plays *D&D*. Please contact Kevin Berryman, ☎ Swindon 610851.

Mad 15 year old *AD&D/D&D* player wants penfriend (male or female). Write to Matthew Cutts, 49 Grange Street, Christchurch, New Zealand. All replies answered.

N Ireland. Bored 19 yr old seeks other gamer(s) (RPG, wargames etc) or any postal games. Contact: Paul Adams, 7 Springfield Road, Bangor, County Down.

Hawker Harrier searching bandits. Air War. Flat 9, 77 Amhurst Park, London N16 5DL.

Inexperienced (but madly enthusiastic) beginner (20) desperately seeks RPG players in Basildon area. Will learn any game. Contact Matt, 95 Ashfields, Pitsea, Essex SS13 1HT.

Wanted copy of *GW's Griffin Mountain* for *RQ2*. Willing to pay top price but must be in good condition. 120 Heath Road, Sandbach, Cheshire.

London Area? Can you wield pike, musket, sword or tankard with ease? Then join the King's Lifeguard. *Sealed Knot*, Cavaliers and Roundheads. Adrian, ☎ Crayford 529719.

New Club in Bristol seeks players/GMs aged between 14-18. We play *AD&D, CoC, Traveller* and others. Lee, ☎ 0272 772215.

Help! *DMG, PHB, MM1* and *2, Rogue's Gallery, Gods and Deities* books urgently required and *AD&D* scenarios and other books required. Excellent prices paid. For details contact: Richard Kerr, 50 Martyn Street, Airdrie, Scotland.

Need to sell! *AD&D, D&D, Star Frontiers*, books, fantasy science fiction, comic books. Send SAE to: Travis Medeiros, 440 Cole St, Seekonk, MA 02771 USA.

Beginner wishes to meet RPG club in Bradford area. Has *Basic D&D* but will learn any game. Shane, ☎ 594624, after 5pm on weekdays, not weekends.

Elfquest. Are there any fans or holts in Britain? Please contact me. Shade and sweet water. Simon, 41 Galveston House, Harford Street, London E1 4RH.

Wanted. *MMI, FF*. Nick Browne, 1A My Lady's Mile, Holywood, Co Down BT18 9EW or ☎ (02317) 2314.

Help, all my old gaming companions have left the Peterborough area! If you are still here and play *AD&D, CoC, Toon* or anything similar and are over 18 I'd like to hear from you. Jackie Apps, 19 Brudenell, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough 235520.

Grovel! Grovel! Editor of fanzine that needs help, begs for art, articles, for most RPGs. Contact: Alex Stanhope, 4 Stafford Terrace, London W8 7BH.

Help! *AD&D*er seeking other players/DM starting at 1st lvl (ages between 15-18) in the Hucknall, Buliwell or Mansfield area. Contact Marcus, ☎ 631560.

Weymouth. 18 yr old DM/Player seeks individuals/established group for *C&S, SO* or any other RPG (have played in most). Have all *C&S/SO* equipment. Lee, ☎ Weymouth 834260 after 5.30pm.

Swap: *Citadel* Goblinoids, Dwarfs and 1st *Compendium* for *2000AD/Judge Dredd* mags, comics, game, new *MERP*. Will sell. Marcus, 38 Bedford Rd, Reading, Berks RG1 7HS. ☎ 0734 597065.

Teflon wishes to get in contact with the monk who was at *Games Day*, Sat & Sunday. Robert, ☎ 01 720 0073, evenings.

RPGer. Daniel Humble 11/12 seeks similar players in area (and penpals) for *D&D* etc. ☎ Berkhamsted (04427) 74181.

To – Disaster Area, Gangor, Hoe Place and Lady Duction. Watch your backs! Iver Big One and the Giants are on your trail. Catoblepas.

Dudley/Rowley Area. reliable players wanted to form group. Any age/sex welcome. Any games played. Apprentices welcome. Wayne, ☎ 021 223 5851 (after 5.30pm).

Experienced *AD&D, MERP, T&T, Traveller* player/DM is seeking a club/group in Walton-on-Thames area (male age 18). Darren, ☎ W-o-T 222904.

Compt Sidrel announces that the Eye is forming at last. Evil beware!

Help! Will anyone swap my *Star Frontiers* and *Warlock* boardgame for *Golden Heroes* or *Call of Cthulhu*. Contact: Paul Saunders, 208 Thurncourt Road, Thurnby Lodge Est, Leicester LE5 2NH.

Wanted *AD&D* players/DMs in Eltham SE9 area. Any age/experience needed to help start a small club. Or to join one if one already exists. Andy, ☎ 01 859 3798.

Do not trust battle dress. This is a public battle warning. Battle dress is extremely unreliable. It is not the ultimate protection. Bad luck Simon.

AD&D player/DM seeks club or group in the Kirby/Sutton/Mansfield area. Contact: Andy, 57 Wallaton Rd, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts NG17 7NQ, soon.

South London: experienced players/gamemasters wanted to start new group. Most major RPGs, age 16+. Contact Mark, ☎ 871 3669 (7-9pm),

Dobo Long Pockets. Farewell good friend, may your feet grow ever hairy and your pockets be always full, you will be sorely missed. The Alliance.

Fanzines. Want to be stocked in a shop? For further details, contact Stuart Gould, 30 Orchard Drive, Edgware, Middx HA8 7SD. ☎ 01 958 9488.

Wanted. *Warhammer, MERP, T&T* and accessories. Also back issues of *White Dwarf*. Are there any players or clubs in the Cork area? Mark, 37 Hillview Estate, Tramore Road, Cork, Eire ☎ Eire 021 962 981.

Birmingham? *D&D* players/DM needed for delving sessions. Preferably 18+. Contact Andrew Goulding, 4 Edgbaston Rd, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B66 4LA.

Be Known! Quality original stories and artwork are being accepted for the 'Fantasy Symposium' anthology. Work should suggest a fantasy/horror/supernatural/sci-fi theme. Mini-biographies printed with submissions. Payment is 10 copies and recognition. Send to: John S Dwyer, 6 Heather Lane, Walpole, MA 02081 USA.

James Chisel, Quentin Horatio Frout and the rest of your tiresome friends — beware, the whistler lives! C Stanford.

Brighton Area. 14 year-old boy seeks *AD&D* club/players. Willing to learn other RPGs. Ben Shaw, ☎ (0273) 557701.

Pritchard! Stenmin the Magic-User is a useless, thick, cowardly, weedy fairy. At best he is ineffectual, at worst he is silage. Please reply. Signed Malcolm.

Penpal Wanted. Around 13, male/female. I play *AD&D* and *CoC*. *Please* write to Tom, 4 Portland Road, Bowdon, Cheshire WA14 2NY.

To the gang. Belakk the thief alias Neon 'The Strange' McConnell says beware the knife in the dark. Watch your back Pete.

Sla and Alcorane your days are numbered. Ride fast! The worm has turned. Tom.

Male RPGer (16) seeks female penpal of similar age. Play *CoC, AD&D, RQ* and learning others. Dominic Wood, 17 Bow Road, London E3 2AD.

Desperate Male *AD&D/RuneQuester* (15) seeks female companion in London area, aged 14-17 with similar interests. Contact Dave McConnell, Read School, Drax, Selby YO8 8NL.

Wanted Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective, will swap for *D&D Basic, Expert, Companion, X1, B1* and dice or sell *D&D* gear. Marc, ☎ (061) 798 7174.

CLUBS

LYMINGTON
Lymington Role-playing Club
Games: Anything brought along.
Time: Tuesday 6.30-10pm.
Place: The Phoenix Room, Lymington Community Centre.
Comments: Cost 50p/night (first time free). Usually *AD&D, CoC* and *MERP* played. No age restrictions.
Contact: Mark Ryan, ☎ Lymington 43422.

LUTON
New Games Club
Games: *MERP*.
Time: To be arranged.
Place: Players homes.
Contact: Pablo Ferrar, 4 Ridgway Road, Luton, Beds LU2 7RR. ☎ 421534.

LONDON
The Dark Riders FRPG Club
Games: *AD&D, CoC*, anything else.
Time: Every Friday, 7-10pm.
Place: Hanwell Community Centre, Ealing.
Comments: Age 12+, all welcome, first night free.
Contact: David, ☎ 5788122.

SOUTH EAST ESSEX
Shoeburyness Wargames Club
Games: *AD&D, Stormbringer, Traveller, CoC*, other RPGs & Wargames.
Time: Wednesdays 7.30-10pm, also Mondays.
Place: Shoebury Youth Centre, Delaware Road, Shoeburyness.
Comments: Ages 11+, new and experienced players welcome.
Contact: (RPGs) Tim Watts, ☎ Southend 711611; (Wargames) Richard Partridge, ☎ Southend 342156.

ST NEOTS, CAMBS.
St Neots Adventurist Fantasy Unlimited (SNAFU)
Games: *D&D, AD&D, MERP, Bushido, CoC*.
Time: Tuesday, 8pm.
Place: The Canon, New Street, St Neots.
Comments: Over 18s only.
Contact: Just turn up!

LEICESTER
PBC Games Club
Games: Any.
Time: Saturdays and weekdays.
Place: Players Houses.
Comments: Girls very welcome. 13+.
Contact: Alex, ☎ 785767.

HEATHROW & WEST DRAYTON
Orcbusters
Games: *AD&D, CoC, Warhammer, MERP*.
Time: To be arranged.
Place: Members' Houses.
Contact: Paul, ☎ 01 759 3839.

NORTH LONDON
Games: *AD&D, Traveller*, wargames etc.
Time: Saturdays 12-6pm.
Place: Harringay Boys Club, Tottenham Lane, N8.
Comments: Everyone welcome, use back door and a loud knock spell.

NORTHAMPTON
Northampton Games Club
Games: Mostly *AD&D*; but will try others of the RPG variety occasionally.
Time: Evenings, usually 7.30-12pm.
Place: Varies but almost always Northampton area.
Comments: New club seeks adult adventurers of the friendly and dependable mould for campaigns in detailed worlds. 17+ age only. Beginners welcome!
Contact: ☎ (0604) 48687.

BIRKENHEAD
Prenton RPG Club
Games: *AD&D, MERP, Traveller, 007, Battlecars*.
Time: Any.
Place: Any.
Comments: New Club. All welcome 14+.
Contact: Andrew, Prenton Village Road, Birkenhead L43 0TF.

SKEGNESS
Proposed RPG Club
Games: *MERP, CoC, RQ* and more.
Time & Place: To be arranged.
Comments: Age 16+.
Contact: Tom, 204 Lincoln Rd, Skegness, Lincs.

HONG KONG
Phoenix Gaming Society
Games: All.
Time: Mondays, 4-6pm.
Place: Baguio Villas, Pok Fu Lam, Hong Kong.
Comments: All ages.
Contact: Kevin, ☎ 5-517782.

RHONDDA
Rhondda Games Club
Games: Most played.
Time: Sundays 2-6pm.
Place: Ystrad Boys' Club.
Contact: Come along and ask for Richard.

BLYTH
Northumbrian Adventurers Guild
Games: *AD&D, CoC* etc.
Time: Sunday 2-7pm.
Place: Blyth Sports Centre.
Contact: Mick, ☎ Blyth 366881.

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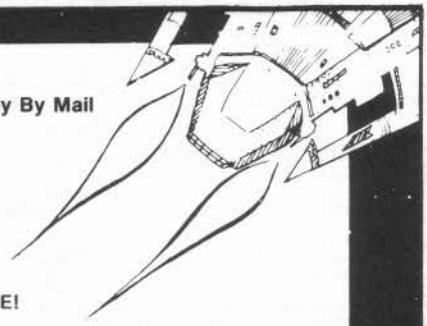

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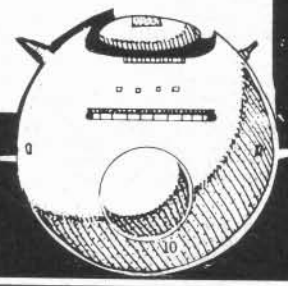

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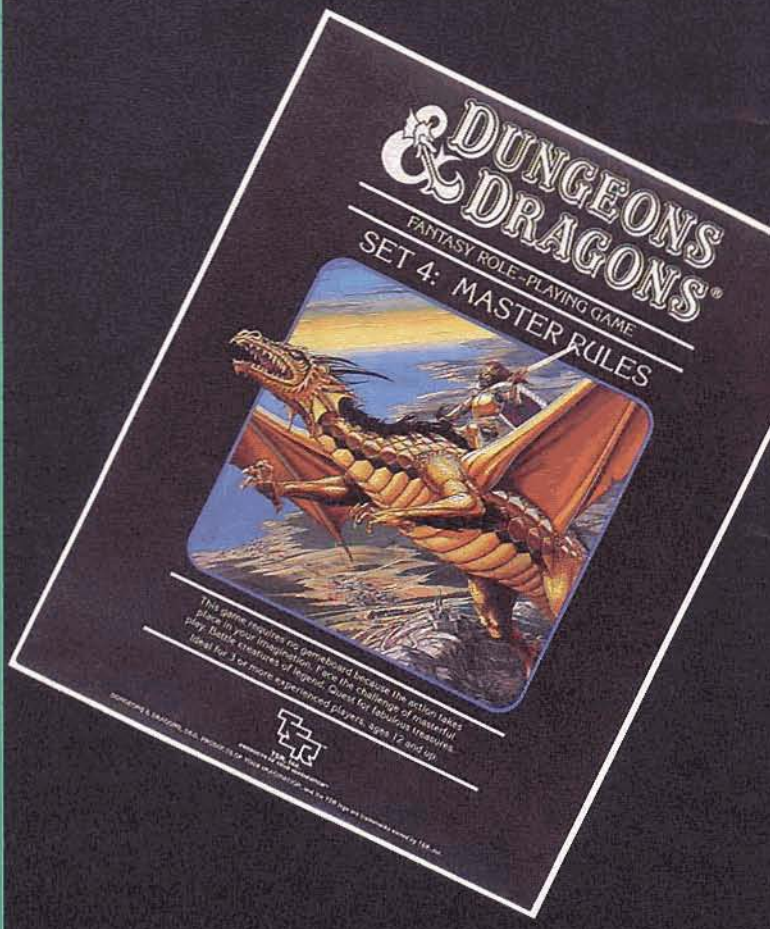

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